THE Godly MAN'S PORTION AND SANCTUARY Opened, IN TWO SERMONS.

Preached *August* 17. 1662.

By *R. A.*

London, Printed *Anno Domini*

BUCK

That lords and kings can
not one gon be ffow

The portion of a godly man
this Book expreseth plaine
Also the peace of god with him
for ever shall remaine
great treasures to the godly man
for ever doth belong
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Thomas Evans
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Thomas Evans
1690

Return unto thy Rest o my
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Thomas Evans his Book

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Thomas Evans
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Mary Carter hur booke
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heavy laden and I will give you rest
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there is sufficient help in Christ and
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THE Godly MAN'S PORTION AND SANCTUARY Opened,

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The Contents.

THE Principal Doctrine, *Thoſe that obey the Goſpel, whatſoever or whenſoever they want, ſhall ever abide in a peaceſull and bleſſed Condition.*

Reaſ. 1. *The God of Peace ſhall be with them.*

The Riches of this Promiſe opened.

1. *God is in the Promiſe.*
   1 *God is in the Promiſe as the God of Peace.*
   2 *He that is the God of Peace, is the God of Power.*
   3 *He that is the God of Peace, is the God of Patience.*
   4 *He that is the God of Peace, is the God of Hope.*
2. *God's being with them, ſignifies,*
   1 *The Heart of God with them.*
   2 *The Help of God with them.*
   3 *The Preſence of God with them.*

Reaſ. 2. *If God be with them, all things ſhall make for them.*

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2. *To what good they shall work.*
3. *To whom.*
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1. *The Providence of God governs the World.*
2. *The Design of Providence (as to the Elect) is the accomplishment of Gods good purpose and Promise.*
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Answered.

Ob. 2. *Suppose a Saint to fall into distraction, and so live and die, what good can possibly be wrought out of this?*

Answered.

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1. *Rejoyce in the Promise of God.*
2. *Lay your selves down quietly and peaceably under it.*

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1. *To the Ungodly, perswading them, and directing them how to get within this Promise.*

Of

Of these,

1 *Some are far from the Kingdom of God. To them, after a Word of Conviction, and Expostulation, are given 7. Directions.*

2 *Others are near the Kingdom of God, Almost Christians.*

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1 *Generall,*

2 *Speciall.*

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Let it answer and be suitable to

1 *The Ends of the Gospel.*

2 *The Dignities the Gospel invests you with.*

3 *The Names which the Gospel puts upon you.*

4 *The Reward and Riches which the Gospel promises.*

5 *The Supports which the Gospel gives.*

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The Special Exhortation, *Containing Directions for a Christian's daily Walk.*

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1 *In an holy Union.*

Directions

Directions for the promoting an holy Union betwixt all Saints, though of different perswasions.

2 *In an united Contention.*

3 *In an holy Boldness.*

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1. *This shall be to your Adversaries an evident token of Perdition.*

2 *To you, of Salvation.*

3 *The Argument of the Text farther urg'd in two Particulars.*

1 *If God be with you, all shall work for your good.*

2 *If God be with you, you shall shortly be with God.*

The Conclusion and Valediction.

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Philip.

PHIL. 4. 9.

Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of Peace shall be with You.

WHat the particular Reason of my choice of this Scripture this day is, if you compare my present station, with the intent of the Apostle, in these words, you will easily understand.

These words of the Apostle, being part of the close of his *Epistle* to the *Philippians*, are his *Valediction*, or *Farewel* to them: It is not unknown to you, that I must now be parted from you; and I have pitched on this *Scripture*, to be the Close of my Twenty Years Ministry among you.

God hath sent me among you to be a *Builder*; and I have chosen this Text, to be an *Hammer* to fasten, and drive home those Nails of Instruction and Consolation, which I have been so long endeavouring to enter into you.

God hath sent me among you, as a *Fisher-man*; and I have chosen these words to be a *closing of the Net*. Behold! once more the Net is spread, and I am now making my last Draught; and oh!

it might have the ſame good ſpeed, as *Peter*'s laſt had, *Luke* 5. 6. It would then pay the Charges, though the Net break.

God hath ſent me among you as an *Husband-man*, to plough, and to ſow; and I am now come *to cover* what hath been ſown.

What is my aim in Preaching, let be yours in Hearing: Oh that both *Preacher* and *Hearers* might heartily joyn in this Deſire! This once more, *God ſpeed the Plough.*

In this deſire and hope I drive on.

In the Text obſerve,

A Precept,
A Promiſe,
An Entail of the Promiſe on the Precept.

In the *Precept* we have,

1. An Act; [*Do.*]
2. An Object; [*The things that you have learned, received heard, and ſeen.*]

The *Promiſe* is in theſe words, [*The God of Peace ſhall be with you.*]

The *Entail* of the *Promiſe* on the *Precept*, you have in the Connective Particle [*And*] which knits them up together. Do the Work, and have the Reward; Obey the Precept, and enjoy the Promiſe; *Do what you have received and heard, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you.* Be careful of the former, and be not careful about the latter; if the *Precept* be performed, the *Promiſe* ſhall be made good.

Doct. 1. Chriſtians muſt be *Learners* before they can be *Doers.* [*What you have learned, that do.*]

Doct. 2. He hath learned well, that hath learned to do well.

Doct. 3.

Doct. 3. Chriſtians Eyes, as well as their Ears, may help them on in Religion; Or, The Holy Examples of Miniſters, ſhould be living Sermons to People. [*What you have ſeen in me*] Therefore the Apoſtle exhorts, *Phil.* 3. 17. *Mark them which ſo walk, as you have us for an Example*; and 1 Cor. 11. 1. *Be ye Followers of me, as I am of Chriſt*; that is, either, I have been a Follower of Chriſt, be ye therefore Followers of me; or elſe, Be ye Followers of me, as far forth as I have been a Follower of Chriſt. Thoſe Miniſters may go off the Stage with Honour and Comfort, who have left behind them the *good Seed* of ſound Doctrine, and the *good ſavour* of an Holy Example.

For mine own part, what my Doctrine and manner of life hath been among you, you are Witneſſes, and God alſo. And however, I have great reaſon to judge and condemn my ſelf before the Lord, and to bewail it, that my Converſation hath been leſs exemplary and uſeful, than, oh that it had been! yet I go off from you, with this Teſtimony upon my heart, that I have not been of thoſe who bind heavy Burthens, and lay them on other mens ſhoulders, but will not touch them with one of their fingers; but my endeavour hath been, to preſs on mine own Soul, and to hold out in my own practice, that Word of Life which I have preached to you; and therefore am bold, in this ſence, to exhort you, in the words of the Apoſtle, *Be ye Followers of me, as far forth as you have ſeen me a Follower of Chriſt.*

Doct. 4. Godly Miniſters, when they are parting from their People, would fain leave God behind them. Though it be not unuſual, when the Lord ſends them away, he goes with them; God and his Meſ-

ſengers, do not ſeldom take their farewel of People together; yet their earneſt deſire is, that though they muſt away, yet the Lord would ſtay.

Doct. 5. Faithful Miniſters would be *Meſſengers of Peace*, going, as well as coming.

As the Apoſtles firſt words were to be, *Peace be unto you*, Matth. 10. ſo ſome of this Apoſtles laſt words were, *The God of Peace ſhall be with you.*

Doct. 6. When ever Miniſters part with their People, if they can but leave Godlyneſs in them, they ſhall certainly leave God with them. Or,

Thoſe that obey the Goſpel, whatſoever, or whomſoever they want, ſhall ever be in a peaceful, and bleſſed condition.

Theſe things do, that is, live in the practice and power of that Doctrine of Godlineſs, *which you have received, and heard*; and then fear not, the God of Peace ſhall be with you.

This Doctrine, I ſhall fully prove to you, after I have premiſed,

That the Doctrine which I have preached to you, is the *Doctrine of Godlineſs*; the ſumme whereof take in theſe four particulars:

1. That Jeſus Chriſt, who came into the World to ſave ſinners, came alſo to ſanctifie and purge them from their ſins.

2. That thoſe that believe in Jeſus, muſt be careful to maintain good Works, or to live a Godly Life.

3. That this Godlineſs is not ſuch a ſlight and eaſie, and empty thing, as the miſtaken World imagine; but ſtands in an exact Conformity of the whole Man, Heart, and Life, to the whole Will of God.

4. That

4. That as whoſoever believes not in Jeſus, ſo whoſoever is ſhort of this true, ſincere Godlineſs, cannot be ſaved.

This is the ſumme of that Doctrine, which I have preached unto you; which being the Eternal Truth of God, I herein imbarque my own Soul and Life, deſiring to be found in that ſame Jeſus, and to be found walking in that ſame way of Righteouſneſs, which I have declared unto you.

2. That my Deſign and Aim, in preaching this Doctrine to you, hath been, to beget in you, and through the influence and aſſiſtance of the Eternal Spirit, to bring you to, this true Godlineſs. I have travailed in Birth with you, that Chriſt might be formed in you; that I might leave you poſſeſſors and partakers of that Grace, which accompanies Salvation; that your Faith might ſtand not in the Wiſdom of Men, but in the power of God; That your Repentance might be Repentance unto Life, not to be repented of; that you might obey from the heart, that Form of Doctrine that hath been deliver'd unto you; that you might ſtand compleat in all the Will of God; that you might be holy, and harmleſs, the Children of God without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked Generation, amongſt whom you muſt ſhine as Lights in the World, holding forth the Word of Life; that being rooted, and grounded in love, you might comprehend with all Saints, what is the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, and might know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledg, and be filled with all the fulneſs of God: To this end, have I taught every one, and warned every one, that I might preſent you perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.

3. That as far forth, as the ſucceſs hath anſwered my Deſign, and aim, upon any of your Souls, ſo far forth ſtand you intitled, to this glorious promiſe in the Text, *the God of Peace ſhall be with you.* Look how many Souls there are amongſt you, that live in the power and obedience of thoſe truths you have received; to ſo many can I with confidence, give this farewell of the Apoſtle, without Ifs, or Ands; the God of Peace ſhall be with you. To whomſoever the Lord hath been a God of *Grace*, to them will he be a God of *Peace*. Whoever amongſt you, have this God of Grace, dwelling and ruling in you, ſhall certainly find this God of Peace, dwelling and abiding with you: As for all others, though I can heartily make this, my parting Prayer, the Lord be with you, the God of Peace be with you; yet I cannot turn this Prayer into a Promiſe, nor give you any aſſurance, that the God of Peace will be with you.

Theſe things premiſed, I ſhall now give you the full proof of the Doctrine, in the following Reaſons. The Doctrine you remember is, thoſe that obey the Goſpel, whatſoever, or whomſoever they want, ſhall ever be in a peaceſull, and bleſſed Condition.

The Reaſons are,

1. The God of Peace ſhall be with them.

2. If God be with them, all things whatſoever befall them, ſhall make for their good.

Reaſ. 1. The God of Peace ſhall be with them; theſe things do, live in the obedience of the holy Doctrine which you have received, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you. This glorious Promiſe is pregnant with all the bleſſings, that Heaven and Earth can afford.

If you ask, why, what is there in it? I demanded of

of you, What is there in God? God is in the Promise, all that is in God, is here assured to the Godly. The *Philosophers*, of old, attained to some glimmerings of the excellencies that are in God, by these 3. wayes.

1. *Per viam Negationis*, conceiving of him as a Being, removed from all things, signifying imperfection: as ignorance, impotence, iniquity, corruptibility, composition, alteration, or any limits or bounds of this Essence, Power and Glory.

2. *Per viam causalitatis*, conceiving of him, as the Fountain of all other Beings; and thence concluding, that whatsoever Excellencies, or perfections, are scattered up and down, in the whole Creation, are all united in him, from whom they had their Original.

3. *Per viam eminentiæ*, by way of Excellency; so that whatever perfections, whatever goodness is to be found in any Creature, though it be not to be found in God, *formaliter*, yet there is that in him (he being the first cause of all) that doth infinitely, superabundantly answer them all. Though there be not the same Specifick Excellencies in him, nor those very pleasures and delights issuing from him, which the creatures yield; yet there are such Excellencies, such perfections, as transcend and surpasse them all.

The Scriptures tell us more positively, and plainly; that God is Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Infinite, Eternal, Unchangeable, All-sufficient, Holy, Righteous, Gracious; the Portion, the Protection, the Rewarder, yea the exceeding great Reward of them that diligently seek him. And this is he, that is in the promise. God is in the promise. I must not inlarge in this spatious Field; I shall keep nearer the Text, and shall confine my

ſelf to theſe four particulars.

1. God is in the Promiſe, as the *God of Peace*, as the Authour and beſtower of Peace. The greateſt of Bleſſings, is the Bleſſing of Peace, Peace hath all bleſſings included in it. It hath poſſeſſion, fruition, and ſecurity; it hath plenty, pleaſure and ſafety: where there's no peace, there's no ſecurity for the holding, nor opportunity of enjoying what we have. Whate-we have, we have it as if we had it not. Peace is the greateſt of Bleſſings.

Peace with God is the moſt glorious of Peace. What is there that's excellent, what is there that's deſirable, that is not comprehended in this Peace with God? Where there's Peace, there's *Pardon*; guilt cannot conſiſt with this Peace; *being juſtified by Faith, we have peace with God.* Where there's *Peace*, there's *Grace*, and holineſs; *there's no Peace ſaith my God, to the wicked.* Where there's Peace, there's *Love*, and good will. As love, ſo peace is the union of hearts. The God of Peace is with you, ſignifies no leſs then this; the Almighty God beares you good will. Theſe two, peace and good will are Twins: *On Earth peace, good will towards men.* Where there's peace, there's *life*, everlaſting life; Internall, is the ſeed of eternall, peace.

This peace is a *Portion*; peace with God is our poſſeſſion of the God of Peace: This peace is a *Sanctuary*; if the God of Peace be with us, the Peace of God will keep our hearts.

Chriſtians, in the World you muſt have trouble; ſuppoſe you have, yet in him you ſhall have peace, who hath overcome the World. Iſa. 26. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace*, (in peace, peace as 'tis in the Originall.) *whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee*, Pſal. 85. 8.

85. 8. *I will hear what the Lord God will ſpeak, he will ſpeak peace to the People, and to his Saints.* What a clattering is there in the World? what tumults, and commotions, are raiſed about the followers of Chriſt; as if the World were falling about their ears? The Devill ſpeaks wrath; evill men ſpeak death, and bonds to them; breathing out threatnings, reproaches, perſecutions againſt them. In the midſt of all this fearful noyſe, Ile hearken, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, what the Lord God will ſpeak. Whatſoever men or Devils ſpeak, Ile hearken, if the Lord God ſpeak at the ſame rate. Oh no, he will ſpeak peace to his Saints: Let the Sons of contention do what they can, the Sons of God ſhall be Sons of Peace; they ſhall live in peace, they ſhall dye in peace, they ſhall dwell in peace for ever. Iſa. 32, 17. 18. *The work of Righteouſneſs ſhall be Peace, and the effect of Righteouſneſs ſhall be quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever. And my people ſhall dwell in a peaceable Habitation, and in ſure dwellings, and in quiet reſting places*; Oh how *great is the peace that they have, who love thy Law.* Chriſtians fear not to follow God; let not that ſad word, nor the fulfilling of it, ſcare you out of your duty. *All that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecution.* What if they do? whileſt you are able to ſay, I am perſecuted, but I have peace; I am poor, but I have peace; in a Priſon, but I have peace; in a Wilderneſs, but I have peace; though all the World be againſt me, God is at peace, my Soul is in peace; what diſcouragement ſhould all that be to you!

2. He that is the God of peace, is the *God of power.* He promiſes peace, and he promiſes no more then he can perform. He can create peace, he can make

make their enemies to be at peace with them. He can make a league for them, with the Beasts of the field; with the Lions, with the Wolves, with the most brutish among the people. He can say to the proud Winds and Waves, peace, be still, and they obey him. He can give them rest [from] the dayes of adversity; he can give them rest [in] the dayes of adversity; he can give his Beloved sleep, upon the points of Swords and Spears.

3. He that is the God of peace, is the *God of patience*. This is my great fear, that though God gives, yet I shall break my peace; The God of peace with me? oh! this is he whom I dishonour, and disoblige daily; by my distrusts, discontents, impatiencies, murmurings; and what peace to such an heart? what peace, so long as such unbelief; so much iniquity, as I find daily within me, remains upon me? Will he, with whom no iniquity can dwell, dwell in that heart, where there is so much iniquity, by which he is provoked every day! but he that is the God of peace, is also the God of patience; who though he will not bear the iniquities of his adversaries, yet he will bear much with the infirmities of his People. Psal. 89. 30. &c. *If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments; if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandements; then will I visit their transgressions with a Rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*

4. He that is the God of peace, is the *God of hope*. I have no peace in possession, whatever there be in the promise. I live in the fire, am born a man of contention. What likelyhood is there, that I should ever live to see a good day? my comforts are broken, my Estate is lost, my liberty is gone; friends

friends I have none, enemies I have many, and mighty, I dwell in *Meſech*, I have my habitation in the Tents of *Kedar*; I am for peace, they are for War: whither ever I look, round about me, before me, behind me, on the right hand, or on the left, all ſpeaks trouble and terrour to me. I have no peace; What, nor no hope of peace neither? where is thy God man? haſt thou a God in thee, and yet no hope in thee? the God of peace, and yet no peace! *the God of hope, and yet no hope! the God of hope will yet fill thee with joy and peace in believing.* Rom. 15. 13. *Why art thou caſt down oh my Soul, and why art thou diſquieted within me? hope in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.* Pſal. 43. 11. The God of hope will open a *Window of hope* in the darkeſt times, a *door of hope* in the moſt deſperate caſes. The God of hope will bear up the ſpirits of his Saints, in hope againſt hope; and this hope will never diſappoint them. It ſhall never be ſaid, there is no peace, there is no hope, till it can be ſaid, there is no God in *Iſrael*.

But how, or in what ſence, is it to be underſtood, that this God of peace will be with us.

I anſwer in 3. particulars.

1. The *heart of God* will be with you. *Joſephs* bleſſing, *the good will of him that dwelt in the Buſh*, will be thy portion. *Deut.* 33. what was that Buſh? the Church, or *Iſrael* of God. What caſe was the Buſh in? 'twas all on a light fire; 'twas all in a flame. Who was it that dwelt in the Buſh? God was in the Buſh; And that kept it from conſuming, though not from burning. The good will of this God ſhall be with thee: his love, his favour, his care. *I love them that love me*, Prov. 8. 17. *The Lord loveth the Righteous*,

Righteous, Pſal. 146. 8. The love of God, is the womb of all good. Hence ſprang *the morning Star*, from the love of God came the Son of God; hence came that *womb of the morning*, the bleſſed Goſpel; which is ſo big with glorious grace; with light, life, pardon, peace, glory, immortality; from the love of God came the glorious Goſpel of God. *The upper Springs*, all ſpiritual and heavenly bleſſings; the *nether Springs*, all earthly and outward bleſſings do all riſe, and bubble up out of this Fountain, *the love of God. The pretious things of Heaven, the pretious Fruits brought forth by the Sun; the pretious Fruits put forth by the Moon; the chief things of the antient Mountains, the pretious things of the laſting Hills; the pretious things of the Earth, and the fulneſs thereof*; All theſe flow in with the *good will of him that dwelt in the Buſh.*

Love is all; the Apoſtle tells us, *Rom.* 13. our love to God, is *the fulfilling of the Law*; that is, it will bring forth all that to God, all that duty, and obedience, which the Law requires. I may tell you, that Gods love to us, is *the fulfilling of the Goſpel*; that is, it will powre down all that upon us, it will do all that for us, which the Goſpel promiſes. Look over the whole Goſpel; read, and ſtudy every pretious leaf, and line of that bleſſed Book; and if there be enough in all that, to make thee bleſſed, and to encourage thee on in thy holy courſe, all this is thine. Thou haſt that love of God with thee, which will fulfill the Goſpel; there ſhall not one jot or tittle fail thee, of all that the Goſpel promiſes. *The zeal of the Lord of Hoſts will perform this.* Iſa. 9. 7.

2. The *help of God* will be with you, the Lord will be your helper in the day of your diſtreſs. *Heb.*

Heb. 13. 5, 6. *He hath ſaid, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee.* So that we may boldly ſay, *The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me.* He hath ſaid, *I will not leave thee*; and therefore we may ſay, *I will not fear*: He hath ſaid, *I will be*, and therefore we may boldly ſay, *the Lord is my helper*: He hath ſaid, He will not forſake, he will help; and who is he that ſhall ſay, There is no help for thee in thy God.

There's no man, whoſe Caſe may not be ſo deſperate, as to be above all humane help. If he ſhould cry out, as the Woman to the King of *Iſrael*; *Help O King*; the King muſt anſwer, *If the Lord do not help thee, whence ſhall I help thee?* If he ſhould cry out, *Help O Man of God*; the Man of God muſt anſwer, If the Lord do not help thee, whence ſhall I help thee? If he cry out, *Help O my friends*, my Wit, my Policy, my Purſe; all theſe muſt anſwer, If the Lord do not help thee, whence ſhall we help thee? But what caſe is there, wherein an [*Help Lord*] will not do.

Fooliſh men count their caſe deſperate, when they come to their [*God help,*] that's an uſuall expreſſion, to ſet forth the extremity and helpleſneſs of any mans caſe. When we ſee men even loſt in any miſery, and their caſe even utterly hopeleſs; then to ſignifie our ſenſe of ſuch mens loſt condition, we cry out, God help that man, God help that woman, they are loſt Creatures. I, but if men did underſtand and conſider what the help of the Lord is; they would ſee there could be no caſe ſo deſperate, but an Help Lord, might recover all: 1 *Sam.* 30, 6. when *David* was greatly diſtreſſed, and all was gone, *he encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God.*

Conſider

Consider here two things.

1. What his Case then was; he was in great distress; he had lost all that ever he had; his spoils that he had taken were all gone, his Corn, and his Cattell, his Wives, and his City were all lost; he had not an habitation in all the World; he had nothing left him but a poor Army, and these were worse than lost, they were even ready to fall upon him. *The people spake of stoning him*, but *he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*

2. What the event hereupon was; why God help'd him to all he had again: vers. 19. *There was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons, nor daughters; neither spoil, nor any thing they had taken, David recovered all.*

Hence note,

1. That a Christian when he hath lost all, hath yet a God to go to at last.

2. Whilest a Christian hath a God to go to, his case is never desperate; let him but encourage himself in his God, and all will be recovered.

Sinners, triumph not over the poor people of God; when they are at their worst, when they are brought as low as your Pride and Malice can lay them; though they should be stript naked, and left destitute of all their comforts, though all the World should ride on their backs, and tread on their necks, yet rejoyce not against them: though they fall, they shall arise; when they are at their worst, there's still help for them in their God.

3. The *presence of the Lord* shall be with them. Whither soever they may be scattered, they shall not be scattered from their God. That Promise made to *Moses*, *Exod.* 33. 14. *My presence shall go*

with

with thee, belongs to all the *Israel* of God. [*My presence*] in the Original, 'tis *my face*; in the Septuagint, *my self shall go with thee.*

The presence of God is either,

Generall, or

Speciall.

By his generall presence, he is every where;

1. *Per essentiam*, he fills all things.
2. *Per Cognitionem*, he beholds all things.
3. *Per Sustentationem*, he upholds all things.
4. *Per Dominium*, he governs all things.

But to let this passe, as not so proper to our purpose.

2. There is his *Speciall*, or gracious Presence; whereby he manifests himself to be with his people,

1. In some *visible, and standing tokens* of his presence; as in those extraordinary, the Pillars of the Cloud, and of the Fire; and in those ordinary, the Ark and the Temple, of old, and the Ordinances of the Gospel now.

2. In some *inward influences*, and irradiations, upon the hearts of his people.

3. In some *visible and signall effects* of his presence; whereof there are very many. There are, amongst others, these two notable effects, of Gods gracious presence; which his people, by vertue of this Promise, may with confidence expect,

{Conduction,
{Covering;

they shall be *Led* in their way; and they shall be *Hid* in their way.

1. *Conduction*; the Lord will be with them, to lead them and guide them in the way that they should go. *Psal.* 25. 9, 12. *The Meek will he guide*

in

in Judgment, the meek will he teach in his way. Pſal. 107. 7. *He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a City of habitation.* Pſal. 5. 8. *Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteouſneſs, becauſe of mine Enemies, make thy way ſtrait before my face.*

The Lord leads his people in their way, chiefly *by his Word*, which is a light to their feet, and a lanthorn to their paths: And ſometimes alſo *by his Providences*, hedging up all by-wayes, and leaving but one way open to them, that hath the leaſt appearance of the way of God. So ordering the matter, that any other way that is before them, looks with too foul a face, to leave any doubt upon them, whether that be the way of God or not.

It's never uncomfortable to the people of God, while they ſee their way before them: *Doubts* about their way, are more perplexing, than *dangers* in their way. When they know what God would have them do, they can chearfully truſt him for any thing they are like to ſuffer. Doſt thou meet with Wolves or Lions in thy way? thou mayſt bleſs God 'tis there thou meeteſt them, 'twould be ill meeting them elſewhere.

2. *Covering* or Protection in their way: *Pſal.* 31. 20. *Thou ſhalt hide them in the ſecret of thy preſence, from the pride of man; thou ſhalt keep them ſecretly in a pavilion, from the ſtrife of tongues.* [Thou ſhalt hide them in thy preſence] or face; thy light ſhall be their dark place to cover them: *Thou art my hiding place*, Pſal. 32. 7. [In the ſecret of thy preſence] the Saints hiding place is a ſecret: Such, where neither the pride of men can find them, nor can they underſtand what it is. Reproaches ſhall not find them, perſecutions ſhall not find them, whoſe Souls are hid

hid in God: they are not found, when they are found; they are hid when they ſeem to lye moſt open, and moſt expoſed to mens will, and luſt. Sinners do not underſtand what refuge the Saints have in God. It is a great ſecret, a myſtery to them: as the joy of the Saints, the comforts of the Saints, are a ſecret; *A ſtranger ſhall not meddle with his joy:* So is their ſafety or ſecurity; they do not underſtand what kind, nor how great ſecurity; what ſure, nor what ſweet repoſe, the Saints find in God. The ſecret of God's preſence is a ſure, and a ſweet reſting place, for all his Saints; but how ſure, and how ſweet, no man knows, but they that enjoy it. The *ſecret intimations*, of the care of God for them; of his everlaſting kindneſs to them; of his governing hand, in all that befalls them, working it to their greater good; the *ſecret ſupports* and refreſhings darted in, as the beams of his Countenance; their *ſecret ſence*, that their head, their main, is in ſafety, though they have bruiſes in their heel, will yield ſuch reſt in the day of greateſt adverſity, as men can neither ſee, nor take from them. The Pillar of the Cloud interpoſed, did both hinder the *Egyptians* purſuit, and hide from their eyes, the comfort of that light which ſhined upon the Camp of *Iſrael*. *Moſes* knew what the comfort of God's preſence meant, when he ſaid, *Exod.* 33. 15. *If thy preſence go not with us, carry us not hence.* 'Tis (if conſidered) a great word. *Iſrael* was then in a Wilderneſs; among wild beaſts, among briars, and thorns, in a weary pilgrimage; but they had God among them: The Lord was carrying them to *Canaan*, the Land of their reſt, a Land flowing with milk & honey: but *Moſes* prayes, *If thy preſence go not with us, carry us*

not hence. We had rather be where we are, in a Wilderneſs with God, than go to *Canaan*, and leave our God behind us. If thy preſence go with us, we are willing to go; when thou wilt, whither thou wilt, which way thou wilt; though by the Tents of *Edomites*, *Iſhmaelites*, *Moabites*, *Hagarens*; though through the Armies of *Anakims*, *Zamzummims*: wee'l go any whither, ſo God go with us. The abſence of God makes a *Canaan* worſe than a *Wilderneſs*; the preſence of God makes a *Wilderneſs* better than a *Canaan*: And this preſence of God, ſhall be the Lott of all his Saints.

3. Reaſ. 2. If God be with you, all ſhall make for you: All Providential Occurrences, and Events whatſoever; all Difficulties, Straits, Diſaſters, Diſappointments, whatſoever, that may come upon you, ſhall make for your good. *Rom.* 8. 31. *If God be with us, who can be againſt us?* Who can be againſt us! that is, None can be againſt us: Or if any be, yet thoſe that are againſt you ſhall be for you. *Gen.* 42. 36. *Joſeph is not, and Simeon is not* (ſaid old *Jacob*) and muſt *Benjamin* away too! *all theſe things are againſt me*: but yet as old as he was, he lived to ſee all making for him. *Rom.* 8. 26. *We know all things ſhall work together for good to thoſe that love God.* This is ſuch a Promiſe, as, if it were throughly believed, would ſet our feet on the necks of all our fears and dangers; and will prove the truth of *Samſon's* riddle, *Out of the eater came meat, and out of the ſtrong, ſweetneſs.*

Now becauſe there is ſo great encouragement to godlineſs in it, I ſhall ſpend the more time in inlarging upon it; and ſhall ſhew,

1. What thoſe things are which are eſpecially intended,

tended, in that comprehenſive term (*all things.*)

2. What that good is, which theſe things ſhall work to.

3. To whom theſe things ſhall work for good.

4. How theſe things ſhall work for good.

5. That they ſhall undoubtedly work for good, to them that love God.

1. What thoſe things are, which are eſpecially intended, in that comprehenſive term [*All things.*] Some there are, as *Auguſtine* with others, who underſtand it *univerſally*, of all things whatſoever, whether good or evill, extending it even to the *Sins of the Saints.* It's true, God doth often bring good out of theſe evils; making uſe of former ſins, to be forces againſt future: as the thorn, that did hurt in the Garden, will be of uſe in the hedg; ſin often becomes its own death, which was intended to be the death of the Soul: There's nothing that doth make the Sinner more weary, and wary of ſin, than Sin it ſelf; the review of what we have done, doth oftenest fright us from doing ſo any more. When you look back on ſin, and ſee its face, (for ſin carries its face in its back) you'l fear it the more, when ever you meet it again. There's no argument doth more effectually humble, and break the heart, and make it more fearful, and watchful againſt ſin, than the ſhame, and the ſmart of thoſe ſins we have fallen by: he that hath felt the wound, will take heed how he playes with edge-tools. This is true, God doth often make this uſe of ſin, to be its own cure: and therefore 'tis not ſeldom ſeen, that the *chief of Sinners* have come to be the *chief of Saints.* Yet, beſides, that this is not the ſubject matter that the Apoſtle is here treating of; let thoſe that bring ſin within the

compass of this promise, and make this to run into the sence of it; that even all the sins of the Saints shall work for their good, let such tell us, how, or in what way it's imaginable, that the *sinful decayes* of such who backslide from God, and never recover to their former life, and vigour, but live and die in a languishing state of Soul; let them tell us, how such sins can be imagined to work for their good: till then, we must enter our dissent from this Interpretation.

This then is not the sence of the promise, that all sins shall work together for good.

And yet if it were, it would be but a poor argument, to take the more liberty to sin, because God will turn it to good; this would be even as rational, as for a man to tear his flesh, break his bones, pluck out his eyes, burn his house, &c. because God will turn all his suffering to good: he is little better than mad, that would not conclude such a man out of his Wits.

Others restrain it to the *evill things* that befall the Saints; not the *turpia*, but the *tristia*, their sufferings and afflictions; to that vanity, and those vexations, they are in bondage under, and under which, with the whole Creation, they groan and travail in pain, waiting for their redemption; of which, the Apostle had been treating in the former part of the Chapter. And yet while they pitch the sence, especially on such things as these; they grant it may be extended to all other things, sin only excepted; *ad omnes res, creaturas, eventus, tum secundos, tum adversos*: To all things and events, whether prosperous or afflicting. So *Paraus*, with others.

And these I take to have hit the right. All heavy things,

things, all the ſufferings and afflictions of the Saints; and not only theſe, but all things elſe whatſoever, that in the whole courſe of Providence be their lot or portion: all the dealings of God with them, all the diſpenſations of Providence towards them, ſhall all work for their good.

2. What is that good, which theſe things work to the Saints; or in what ſence all things may be ſaid to work good to them. The ſence in generall is this; They ſhall all work to their welfare; they ſhall all happen to them for the better: there ſhall nothing befall them, but one time or other, they ſhall have reaſon to ſay; 'Twas well for me, that it was thus with me. The wiſdom and goodneſs of God, did cut out ſuce portions continually for me, did lead me thorow ſuch a *ſeries* and ſucceſſion of caſes and events, which though I could not underſtand, yet now I ſee that every condition, every contingency and occurrence of my life, through which Providence led me, was uſeful, and could not well have been wanted, but it would have been the worſe for me. Thus in the generall.

Particularly, for the fuller underſtanding what good it is that all things to, conſider, That there is a Twofold good of the Saints; Such as they obtain and enjoy, whileſt they are *in via*, in their way or Courſe; or ſuch as they ſhall obtain, when they are *in termino*: when they are gotten to the end of their way, when they are come to their place. Or thus; There is a Three-fold good of the Saints,

Temporall.
Spirituall.
Eternall.

1. *Temporall good*, or our *bona corporis*, the our-

ward good things of this life, which may ſerve, and pleaſe, and delight us in theſe dayes of our pilgrimage; which may abide with us, and attend us to our graves, but there will take their leave of us.

2. *Spirituall good*, or our *bona animæ*, and thoſe are either, 1. External, as the Ordinances of God; the Light, Liberties, and priviledges of the Goſpel; the Society, and Communion of Saints, and our peaceful and plentiful enjoying of them. 2. Internal, as ſpiritual Grace, Faith, Love, Hope, Patience, &c.

3. *Eternal good*, or that glory and joy, that everlaſting reſt and peace, the poſſeſſion of that Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that is reſerved in Heaven for us.

Now here note theſe things.

1. That our *bona corporis*, our outward good things, are only good *for us*, as they are conducible *ad bonum ſpirituale*, to the good of our Souls. The *bona viæ*, are only good in the event, when they tend to the *bonum Patriæ*. This World is but a Nurſery for Eternity; we are planted in this, in order to our tranſplanting into the other World; and whatever we have here, is either good, or evill, according to the reſpect that it bears to hereafter: As far forth as our immortal part is improved by theſe periſhing things, ſo far forth onely are they good for us. He that hath this Worlds goods, and is not hereby made more rich towards God; he who proſpers in this World, and yet his Soul doth not proſper; much more, he whoſe worldly fulneſs becomes the emptineſs, and leanneſs of his Soul: Are theſe good things good for him? Is he in proſperity

ſperity upon a true account, whoſe Soul proſpers not? It is not ever good to proſper in the World; it cannot be univerſally ſaid, It's good to be rich, it's good to be in health, it's good to be in honour, it's good to be at liberty; the contrary may ſometimes be true; it's good to be poor, to be ſick, to be in diſgrace, to be in bonds; the neceſſity of our Souls doth not ſeldom require it: Then alone is it good to be full, and to abound, when our outward abundance farthers our ſpiritual welfare.

Chriſtians, could we receive this truth, That our outward good things are only good for us, as far forth as they conduce to our ſpiritual good; could we receive this truth, and live under the power of it; what a different judgment ſhould we then have of all theſe worſdly matters, from what we have? and how ſtrangely would the courſe of this world be then changed? Would there then be ſuch violent and eager purſuing theſe carnal things? Would there then be ſuch whining, and complaining, and murmuring at every croſs providence? We would then ſay, This may be good for me; good for my Soul, how ſad ſoever it looks.

2. That external ſpiritual good things, the Miniſtry, and Ordinances of the Goſpel, &c. are ſo far good to us, as they conduce to our internal ſpiritual good: and they being ordinarily ſo, it muſt be concluded, That ordinarily it is good for us, that we enjoy them, and be not deprived of them. God may ſee the cutting Chriſtians ſhort of thoſe priviledges, and Liberties, to be ſometimes needful for them; and then even this alſo makes for their good: Whereof more anon.

3. That our inward ſpiritual good, is good for us, ſo far forth as it tends to our eternal good: and therefore grace is ever good for us. It's ever true; It's good to be holy, good to be humble, to be in the fear of God, and to flouriſh in his grace. We may have too much Money, too much Credit, but we can never have too much grace. Our greateſt flouriſhing and fruitfulneſs in grace, will certainly abound to our more full reward.

4. Note, That this is the plain ſence, and meaning of the promiſe, *All things ſhall work* [*for good,*] that is, Whatſoever befalls, ſhall certainly promote our internal, and eternal welfare; And as far forth as the outward Priviledges of the Goſpel, yea, and the good things of this life, conduce towards this, all ſhall work for theſe alſo. If it be good for us to rich, if it be good for us to be in honour, good for us to be at liberty; good for our Souls, good in reference to our eternal ſtate; if it be good for us that we enjoy the Miniſtry of the Goſpel; there ſhall nothing befall us, that ſhall hinder; there ſhall be nothing wanting to us, that might further this our good.

The Summe is, That all providential diſpenſations ſhall be ſo ordered, that we ſhall want nothing but what it's better want than have: We ſhall ſuffer nothing but what we cannot well be without, but what the good of our Souls requires; and that which we do poſſeſs, and that which we do ſuffer, ſhall not fail of bringing about its end, the advancing our eternal good.

And if this be the meaning, what a glorious Promiſe is this? What can any rational man deſire more? nothing ſhall befall him but ſhall be for his good:

good: He ſhall be deprived or kept ſhort of nothing, but what he had better be without than have. He that is unſatisfied with this Promiſe, it is either from *Luſt* or *Unbelief*; Either he doth not believe, that God is true, and will perform this Word: or elſe 'tis becauſe his Luſt muſt be ſatisfied, though with the denyal of his Reaſon and Intereſt; he that deſires an Eſtate in the World, Eaſe, Pleaſure, Liberty, or any thing elſe upon any other terms, but as they may be for his reall good, hath as much loſt his Wits as his Faith: and he that will take upon him to know what's good for him, better than God, may as well take upon him to govern the World. You may with as good reaſon, deſire a Feaver, or a Dropſie, that you may have the pleaſure of your drink; as for the pleaſures that carnal things would bring you in, to deſire them, when they would be a ſnare to your Souls.

3. To whom theſe things ſhall work for good; *To them that love God*, to them that are *called according to his purpoſe*: To the people of God; who, you ſee, are here deſcribed by their *Election* and *Vocation*, [the *called according to his purpoſe*] and their *Sanctification*, [they *that love God*,] *Love is*, as I told you before, *the fulfilling of the Law*. Love God, and you will live in the obedience of his whole Will: Theſe are the people, to whom this Promiſe is made; prove your Calling and Election, prove your Sanctification, and you may write your names in this glorious Promiſe; *All things ſhall work for your good.*

To thoſe that are Rebels, and Reprobates from God, all things ſhall work together for evil. Whilſt things hurtful work together for good to the Saints;

all

all good things work together for the hurt of Sinners: their Peace hurts them, their plenty hurts them, their pleasure hurts them; yea, both their prosperity, and adversity; their plenty, and their poverty; their pleasure, and their trouble; their honour and disgrace, every thing that befalls them, turns to their prejudice. Their prosperity destroys them; their Table is their snare; their pleasures are their plagues; and their very punishments are turned into sin: every thing that befalls them, heightens and hardens them in their wickedness, and ripens them for vengeance. God is not with them, and therefore nothing prospers with them. God is with his Saints, and therefore nothing comes amiss to them, but all for their greater advantage: Christians, this is your *portion*, and your *peculiar*, wherein the men of this World shall neither partake with you, nor be ever able to deprive you of it.

4. How all things shall work for their good; in special, how shall the *evill things*, the Sufferings of this life be for their good: How can this be? Must we disbelieve our Senses, lay down our Reasons, ere we can believe the Scriptures? Must we call evil, good; and good, evil? Must we count darkness light, and light darkness? Is pleasure pain, and pain pleasure? Is loss gain, and gain loss? Is ease torment, and torment ease? Doth Religion make things cease to be what they are, and to be what they are not? or at least, Must we believe, that darkness is the *Mother* of light, that good is the *daughter* of evil? Can we gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Can darkness give light, or death it self bring forth life? Must we say, that contraries no longer destroy, but produce each other, and that the womb

womb brings forth its own deſtruction? How can theſe things be?

But muſt God give a Reaſon of his actions, or elſe they are not! though evil cannot bring forth good, darkneſs cannot bring forth light; yet, Cannot God bring forth good out of evill, light out of darkneſs? Though darkneſs cannot bring forth light; evil cannot bring forth good, by a natural cauſation; yet, Cannot God make evil an occaſion of good? Though it do not work *efficiently*, yet can it not work *objectively* neither to it? Though the torment the Medicine puts men to, be not eaſe yet, May it not work towards eaſe? May not the ſtorm, though it help not, yet haſten the Labourer on his work, the Traveller on his way? May not the darkneſs of the night, make more diligent in the day? May not ſickneſs teach men more temperance, and poverty more frugality?

But to proceed more diſtinctly; How can the Saints evil things work to their good? That they do ſo, cannot be denyed, unleſs we will deny, not only Scripture, but common Senſe, and Experience; but how comes it to paſs?

I anſwer, in 4. Particulars:

1. The Afflictions and Tribulations of the Saints are *the way* that leads them on to the poſſeſſion of that good, which God hath intended to them; afflictions are the way of the Kingdom; the Croſs is the way to the Crown. *Acts* 14. 22. *Through many Tribulations we muſt enter into the Kingdom of God.* Pſal. 66. 11, 12. *Thou broughteſt us into the net, thou haſt laid affliction upon our loyns, thou haſt cauſed men to ride over our heads: we went through fire and water, thou broughteſt us into a wealthy place.*

Obſerve

Obſerve it; Their Troubles are their way to their Triumph; their very falling into the net, their way to eſcape. Their Enemies boaſt; Eſcape! Ariſe! yes, let them free themſelves with ſuch hopes while they will, we have them ſure enough, we have them under foot, we have them in the net: If this be their way, wee'l keep them in their way long enough; now we have them down, they ſhall not be able to riſe. I, but yet it appears, through all this the Lord led them forth into a wel thy place. The High-way of the proud is not their more ready way to the duſt, than the duſt of Saints is their ſure way to honour. When *Iſrael* were to go to *Canaan*, they muſt take the Brick-Kilnes, the Red Sea, the Wilderneſs, *Jordan*, in their way: Could any one have imagined, that the bondage, the ſtraits they were under, the doubling their Tasks, the cruelty of their Task-Maſters, their encloſure at the Red Sea, did mean any good to them? yet, How fell it out at laſt? their darkeſt diſpenſations had light in their latter end; Their greateſt bondage leads on to their greateſt liberty.

Every croſs Providence, is a ſtep to the accompliſhment of the Promiſe; the Wheel is ever moving on to its end; it moves ſtill forwards, even when it ſeems to go quite backwards: As the River, by its many turnings and windings, forwards and backwards, is ſtill in motion to the Sea, when it ſeems to be running quite contrary.

Chriſtians, if ever the Salvation of God ſeems to be removed farther off from you; if the work of God ſhould at any time ſeem to go backwards; if croſs Winds ſhould turn the whole courſe, ſo that you appear rather to be marching back to *Egypt*, than

on

on to *Canaan*; yet be not diſcouraged; though your way be an unlikely, and unpromiſing way, though you be led about forwards, and backwards, yet ſtill you are making on: though the leſſer Wheels be never ſo croſs and contrary in their motions, yet the great Wheel is ſtill moving Right on to your bleſſed and hoped end. God intends your good, your ſpiritual good here, your eternal good hereafter: and believe it now, for he will let you ſee it hereafter, that thoſe very things which moſt threaten your miſcarriage, and a total abortion of your hopes, are made all to concur to the bringing them about, and to your more full and ſpeedy poſſeſſion of them.

Note farther here two Things.

1. All things work; not they ſhall work, *de futuro*, but *de preſenti*, they do work; as the Apoſtle ſays, *The Myſtery of Iniquity*; ſo we may ſay, *The Myſtery of the Saints Redemption doth already work*; the work is already on the wheel, and every wheel is in its motion for you: not onely your *Brethren*; the *Saints* and *Angels*, who all are praying for your peace, and ſeeking your good, but your *Enemies* alſo, the *Dragon*, with all his Armies, are at work for you; all *the Councils* of this World, are already ſitting upon the very *matter*: God hath call'd them together for this purpoſe, the *Pope*, with all his *Conclave*; the *Jeſuits*, *Prieſts*, *Monks*, and *Friars*, with all their *Covents*; yea, the *Devil*, with all his *Conclave* of *Hell*, are all at work for the good of *Saints*. It's true, they mean not, nor intend any ſuch thing, their Deſigns are againſt you; they count, they are working for themſelves; as 'tis ſaid concerning the *Aſſyrian*, *Iſa.* 10. 6,7. God ſent him forth upon a Deſign of his

his own, to execute his Counſel, in the puniſhing of *Hypocrites*; to purge out the Chaff from the Wheat; *nevertheleſs, he meaneth not ſo, nor doth his heart think ſo*: the *Aſſyrian* minds not what God's Deſign is, but follows his own Deſign; fights for himſelf, and ſpoils for himſelf; but God's Deſign is ſtill carryed on by him, though he think not of it.

All the *Events* in the World are driving the ſame way; every Diſeaſe or Infirmity that comes upon you, every Loſs that you ſuſtain, every Scoff or Reproach that you ſuffer; the ſhame in your Faces, the Sorrow of your Hearts, the Torment in your Bowels, the Aches in your Bones, are all working your good. All *the changes* of your Conditions, your fair Weather and your foul, your Sun-ſhine and your Clouds, your Plenty and your Wants, your Eaſes and your Pains, your Liberties and your Priſons, are all making for you; your good is *already* working by all theſe Things.

See Chriſtians, what an Harveſt of Bleſſedneſs is growing up to you, out of this *Promiſe*; the *Seed* is already ſowing, your good is already working; God is at work, the whole Creation is at work, Men and Angels, good men and evil men, Friends and Enemies, Heaven and Earth, and Hell, are already ingaged to work your good.

2. They work together, that is, as ſome underſtand it, they work together with God: all theſe ſecond cauſes work together with the firſt cauſe; or as others, They work together amongſt themſelves: There is ſuch a concatenation and concentring of all theſe ſecond cauſes, in the ſame Deſign, that however they ſeem to thwart, and croſs, and deſtroy ſome of them, what the others build and advance, yet they

are

are all united in their End; they jointly contribute to the Weal of the *Saints*. Though, if I miſtake not, this latter be the more ſence of the two: Yet I know no reaſon, why both may not be underſtood. In the hand, and under the conduction of *Providence*, all theſe lower Things concur and co-operate in the good of the Church.

By the way, obſerve, what an Harmony there is, in all the Works of *Providence*: The moſt croſs and thwarting *Occurrences*, do all conſpire, and go hand in hand, to bring about the ſame End. As the differing Vertues of various Drugs, do all concur to make up the Medicine: As the differing ſounds of ſeveral ſtrings or Inſtruments, do altogether make up the Melody: As the differing Colours in a Picture, the dark as well as the brighter, do jointly contribute to the Beauty of the Piece; no leſs do the moſt contrary, and contradictory Actions and Events, both make up the Beauty of *Providence*, and jointly ſubſerve that one End, to which, by an unſeen Hand, and an all-ſeeing Eye, they are directed, and intended.

2. The *evill things* that befall the *Saints*, come upon them *to keep out worſe things*. Where ever the croſs comes, if it had not come, ſomething worſe might? The *Croſs* may be a means to ſecure from the *Curſe*: The *Curſe* was ſlain on the *Croſs* of *Chriſt*; and our Croſs alſo hath its uſe, to the delivering us from it.

1 Cor. 11. 32. *We are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the World*; *Periiſsem niſi periiſſem*: I had died, if I had not ſuffer'd: 'Tis more mens caſes, beſides his that ſpake it; 'tis no bad Exchange, to have a Croſs in ſtead of a Curſe.

3. The

3. The *evill things* of the *Saints*, *prepare them for better things*; That they may work good for them, they are working them to good; working out their ſinne and iniquity, wearying them of ſin, *Hoſea* 2.6. *I will hedge up her way with Thorns, then ſhall ſhe ſay, I will return*: Sin brought in Afflictions into the World, and Afflictions help to carry ſin out; the Croſs, to which Sin was once nail'd, is now nail'd to Sin: The *Saints* can ſeldom be medling with Sin, but they find it too heavy for them; The Croſs, that is nail'd at the farther end of it, makes it a Burthen which they cannot bear. In ſome ſence, not onely the Bloud of the Lamb, but the Bloud of the Sheep may purge away Sin; though onely the προτερήματα χριστῦ can expiate and take away the guilt; yet the ὑστερήματα may have their place, in purging away the filth of ſin: *By this ſhall the Iniquity of* Jacob *be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſinne.* Our Lord beats the Devil with his own Weapons, by thoſe very means, *purging* his *Saints*, by which he endeavours to *pollute* them; making thoſe very *Perſecutions*, by which he labours to *force* them from *Holineſs*, to *fix* them in it: A *fawning World* does them more mi chief, than a *fuming Devil*. By that the Devil hath caſt up his Cards, he will find himſelf a Loſer by all his Rage.

Chriſtians, comfort your hearts; thoſe Flouds that are caſt forth againſt you, ſhall but waſh you the whiter, and make you more meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the *Saints* in Light: your *Purgatory* prepares you for your *Paradice*. No unclean thing muſt enter in thither; and you are not like to be made ſo clean, as by falling into the hands of the unclean. The *Saints* never look ſo well; like Sheep come

come from the waſhing, as when they come up from the pots, their very black makes them comely.

Oh Chriſtians! what a comfort would it be, if your *Experiences* might come in, and ſeal to this Truth: If you could ſay, Thus it hath been with me; *before I was afflicted, I went aſtray:* I was proud, and vain, and wanton, and ſlothful, and carnal, but *now have I kept thy Word.*

Sinners, whatever your mind be in perſecuting the *Saints*, never think to debauch them by it; if that be your aim, you miſtake your courſe; the living Spark which God hath kindled in them, will not be blown out, but be blown up, by your puffing at it; the Dirt you caſt upon them, doth but ſcour them the brighter: You take the beſt courſe you can, to keep them cloſer to the Lord, and his way: The warm Sun, will more hazard the loſs of their Garments, than the bluſtring Wind: Let them alone, the Spirit of the Lord within them, will be too hard for Hell, with all its black Regiments; and will not onely ſecure them, but advance them yet higher, by all their Aſſaults. Theſe Stars ſhine the brighteſt, when the Night is darkeſt: When you have done your worſt, 'twill be the better with them; though they will not thank you, yet they will thank God, for what they have ſuffer'd by you. If this be your aim, to make them like your ſelves, you may ſet your hearts at reſt, and give over ſuch a vain attempt: Your fury is like to do as little to force them, as your vertues are to invite them to a compliance with you. Your Faces are too *foul* to draw them into your love, and yet not *fierce* enough to drive them into your fear. *Sathan*, try thy utmoſt ſtrength and skill, and if thou loſeſt not by thine own play at laſt, if thou find'ſt not the

poor people of God gotten nearer *Heaven*, by thy attempts of plucking them down to *Hell*, then let thy Lyes be believed, before the Everlasting Goſpel.

Chriſtians, make me not aſham'd in this ſame confident boaſting of you; yea, contradict not your God, by ſuffering your ſelves to be corrupted by evil men. The Lord himſelf hath adventur'd deep upon your Integrity and ſtedfaſtneſs: The Honour of his Truth and Faithfulneſs lies at ſtake; he hath ſaid, *They ſhall not be afraid of any evil tidings, their heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord*, Pſal. 112. 7. He hath ſaid, *By this ſhall their iniquity be purged, and this ſhall be all the fruit, to take away their ſin.* God hath ſaid, *All things ſhall work together for good to them.* They ſhall not be the worſe, but the better, for all that befalls them: They ſhall love me and my holy ways the more, they ſhall cleave unto me the cloſer, they ſhall be made more pure, and more tender: by all they ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake, they ſhall love Conſcience, and their Integrity, and Faithfulneſs to it, never the worſe, for that it hath coſt them ſo dear; but ſhall prize it the more, and be the more wary and tender, how they pollute and turn aſide from it. God hath adventur'd deep on you, make not him a Liar; the Devil and his Inſtruments will be ready to ſay, concerning you, as once he did to the Lord, concerning his Servant *Job*; *Put them into our power, let us have the handling of them a while, and thou ſhalt quickly ſee, what truth there is in them, or what truſt there is to them; they'l curſe thee to thy face, they'l deny thee to thy face, they'l eat their own words, they'l be aſhamed of their God, their Godlineſs, and Confidence.* Let God be true, Chriſtians, and the Devil a Liar; be living *Commentaries* on this *Bleſſed Text:* Let the World,

World, and their black Prince ſee, that they cannot make you miſerable, becauſe they cannot make you ſinners like themſelves: That you are all the more upright, for falling into the hands of a crooked Generation: Let them ſee, that though your God will not ſuffer you, yet you are contented, *to ſerve him for nothing*. That though his Hedge be removed from you, yet your Heart is not removed from him: Be able to ſay, *Though all this be come upon us, Our heart is not turned back, neither have we declined thy way*. Let your ſtanding and increaſing in the Grace of God, and abounding in the Works of Righteouſneſs, be a ſtanding Witneſs for God in the World, and a Seal to his Scriptures, and in ſpecial to the Glorious Truth of this Text.

4. The *evil things* of the Saints, *prepare better things for them*: their ſufferings go into their Reward: *As the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, ſo our conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt*: Every ſuffering comes with a comfort in its Belly; and the ſweet is ſo great, as ſwallows up the bitter; 'tis a hundred fold, that the *Saints* gain by all their Loſſes in this Life, but how great ſhall their Reward be in *Heaven*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding Eternal Weight of Glory*. They ſhall not only have weight for weight, meaſure for meaſure; their Load of Glory, for their Load of Sufferings; but they ſhall have over-weight, over-meaſure; good meaſure, preſſed down, heaped together, and running over, ſhall then be given unto them: According to their deep Poverty, ſhall be the height of their Riches; according as their blackneſs hath been in their Houſes of Bondage, ſhall be their Brightneſs in the Land of

Promiſe; *for all thy ſhame thou ſhalt have double*: The double of thy Reproach in Renown, the double of thy Tears in Triumphs, all thy bottled Tears ſhall be returned in Flagons of Joy, yea in Rivers of Eternal Pleaſure.

By this time Chriſtians, you ſee what Glory there is in this good Word: *All things ſhall work together for good to them that love God.* And that none may have the Face to ſay all this is but conceit; I ſhall, in the next place, bring in clear, and undeniable Evidence, that it is certainly, and unqueſtionably, ſo as hath been ſaid: And therefore know,

5. That all things do, and ſhall certainly work *for good to them that love God.* This (beſides the Teſtimony of this Scripture) I ſhall make evident from theſe three Propoſitions:

1. There is a *Divine Providence* that governs the World.

2. The Deſign of *Providence*, is the accompliſhment of the good purpoſe and promiſe of God.

3. The *Providence* of God ſhall never fail of accompliſhing its End.

1. There is a *Divine Providence* which governs the World; the *Epicureans*, who deny *Providence* and leave all on *Chance* and *Fortune*, may as well deny that there is a God, which yet they are aſham'd to ſtand to. Of *Epicurus* himſelf it was ſaid, *Qui nihil pudendum pudet, pudet tamen Deum negare.*

It can be no way reconcileable to the infinite Wiſdom of God, who made this Glorious Fabrick with the various Creatures therein, either not to determine them to their Ends, or elſe to take no care for their accompliſhing thoſe Ends they are determined to. The whole Current of Scripture is ſo plain

plain in theſe matters, that he that runs may read: Let the following Scriptures, amongſt others, be conſidered.

Pſal. 97. 1. *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoyce, let the Iſles be glad.* Pſal. 67. 15, 16. *The Eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou giveſt them their Meat in due ſeaſon: Thou openeſt thy hand, and ſatisfieſt the deſires of every living thing.* Pſal. 36. 6. *Thou preſerved Man and Beaſt.* Pſal. 75. 6, 7. *Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the Weſt, nor from the South; but God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and ſetteth up another.* Amos 3. 6. *Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?* Pſal. 17. 13, 14. *Deliver my Soul from the wicked, which is thy Sword; from Men which are thy Hand.* The confeſſions of thoſe Infidels, *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Darius*, ſpeak the ſame, *Dan.* 4. 35. *All the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his Will, in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth; and none can ſtay his Hand, or ſay unto him, What doeſt thou?* Dan. 6. 26. *I make a Decree, that in every Dominion of my Kingdom, Men tremble, and fear, before the God of Daniel; for he is the Living God, and ſtedfaſt for ever; and his Kingdom that, which ſhall not be deſtroyed; and his Dominion ſhall be even unto the End: He delivereth and reſcueth, and he worketh Signs and Wonders in Heaven, and Earth; who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the Lions.*

But more diſtinctly, the Lord governs *all inanimate and ſenſitive Creatures*, in their actions; he orders the Stars in their courſes. The Stars in their courſes, he made to fight againſt *Siſera*. He governs *the Winds, and the Floods*; he bringeth forth the

Winds out of his Treaſures, he rides upon the wings of the Wind. He maketh the Clouds his Chariots, he ſitteth on the Flouds; the Thunder, and the Hail, and the Rain, and the Froſts, are all at his Command. He giveth Snow like Wooll, and ſcattereth the hoar froſt like aſhes. He caſteth forth the Ice like morſels; he ſets bounds to the Sea, which it ſhall not paſſe; the Birds of the Air, the Beaſts of the Field, the Fiſhes of the Sea; yea the ſtones and duſt of the Earth, are all at his beck.

More eſpecially, he rules and governs *the men of this World*. He ſits in all the *Counſels of men*, though they ſee him not; he orders all *their Decrees*; there's no Decree can paſſe, unleſs God gives his Vote. He rules in all the *actions of men*; even thoſe things that are acted through our improvidence, come not to paſſe without the Providence of God. He rules in all the *changes that are in the World*; he changes the times and the ſeaſons; he changes Kingdoms, and Governments; he removeth Kings, and ſetteth up Kings; he makes War, and creates Peace; he bendeth the Bow, and he breaketh the Bow, and cutteth the Speare in ſunder, and burneth the Chariots in the fire: Peace, and War, Health and Sickneſs, Plenty and Famine, Life and Death, are all the diſpoſures of his hand. He orders all *the events and cauſalities* of the World; even from the greateſt to the ſmalleſt. Without him, not a Sparrow ſhall fall, nor a hair of the head ſhall periſh: though there be to men, yet to the Lord there are no cauſalities, or contingencies. But all things come to paſſe, according as his Hand and Counſel had before determined.

2. The

2. The deſign of Providence (as it reſpects the Elect) is the accompliſhment of Gods good purpoſe and promiſe. Providence governs the World, and the purpoſe and promiſe governs Providence. All the works of Providence have *rationem mediorum ad finem*. God doth nothing in vain; it is not conſiſtent with the wiſdom of God, to do any thing for nothing. God would have his People look farther than to the things that are before them, becauſe all thoſe things have a farther aſpect themſelves. All the works of Providence have a double aſpect; they look *backward*, to the purpoſe and promiſe; and they look *forward*, to the end for which they are; as they look backward, ſo they have *truth* in them, exactly anſwering the purpoſe and promiſe from which they have their birth. As they look forward, to their end, ſo they have *good* in them; and that good (their ſubſervience to their end) is the reaſon of their being. Here note 2. things.

1. That the ſubſerviency of things to their end, is the goodneſs of them; if the end be good, the means muſt (as ſuch) be good alſo; If what *God* hath purpoſed and promiſed be good, then all things that fall in between, having the reſpect of means to their accompliſhment, muſt upon that account be good. If our croſſes and afflictions, do ſubſerve the bringing about of Gods good will, and good word, we muſt ſay concerning them, *Good are the Works of the Lord.* It is not, how any thing looks, or feels at preſent, but what it meanes, and to what it tends. If the potion be bitter, and yet it tends to health; if the Meſſenger be ill-looked, and ill-favoured, and yet comes upon a good errand, you may bid them welcom. And thus all the Providences of God are good. If you

ſhould ask of any Providence, wherefore art thou come? *comeſt thou peaceably*? comeſt thou for good? they muſt all anſwer, *yes, peaceably*, for good and no hurt. 'Tis but to help all that good into thy hand, which hath been in the heart, and hath proceeded out of the mouth, of thy God that loves thee. There is not a *Meſſenger of Sathan*, that comes to buffet thee, but is alſo a *Meſſenger from God*, that comes to thee for good. The very thorns in thy fleſh ſhall ſerve thee for Playſters, thine eye-ſores ſhall be thine eye-ſalve, and thy very maladies thy Medicines.

2. That this relative goodneſs of all the works of Providence, is the reaſon of their being. Therefore God doth what he doth, that hereby he may do what he hath ſaid and intended. I do not ſay that the reaſon of Gods taking this or that means, is alwayes from any thing in it ſelf, or for its natural tendency to ſuch an end above any thing elſe; God hath his choice of means, he can chuſe here or there at pleaſure, can make uſe of what he will to ſerve his deſign; but the reaſon why things are, is this, God in his Wiſdom, ſaw their *ordinability* to this good end, and thereupon in his Providence, he *orders* and brings them to paſſe.

So that now, what ever befalls a Chriſtian, he hath this to allay and take off the grievouſneſs and ſharpneſs of it; This had never been, but for the good will, and good word of the Lord to me. The Lord God hath ſaid he will bleſs me, and do me good; he will heal me, and ſanctifie, and ſave me, and now he is about it; by this, he is working that Salvation for me.

Chriſtians,

Chriſtians, you have no reaſon to ſay, If the Lord be with me, why am I thus? why ſo poor, why ſo pained, why ſo perſecuted, ſo ſcorned and trampled upon? ſure, if the Lord had meant my good, it would have been better then 'tis with me: No, no, 'tis becauſe the Lord is with thee, and means thee well, that he deals in this manner with thee. The Deſign of his Providence towards thee, is the accompliſhment of his Promiſe.

3. The Providence of God ſhall never fail of accompliſhing its end. There is nothing wanting that might give us the fulleſt aſſurance hereof. For,

1. The Providence of God hath *power* with it. He is the Almighty that hath promiſed; he that ruleth in the Earth, dwelleth in the Heaven, and doth whatſoever he will. *Our God is in Heaven, and doth whatſoever he will. I will work, and who ſhall let it? Iſ.* 43. Who can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, What doeſt thou? were it not for our unbelief, our caſe would be ſtill the ſame, in greateſt difficulties, as when the Coaſts are moſt clear. We might ſay of difficulties, as the *Pſalmiſt* of darkneſs; *there is no darkneſs with thee, to thee the day and night are both alike.* Difficulties are no difficulties with thee, nor is there difference betwixt hard and eaſie. He can ſave with many, or with few; and with none, as well as with ſome. We once read he had too many, but never that he had too few, to bring about his work. Oh how do we diſparage the power of God, when our difficulties make us doubt? Is he God, and not man? Is he ſpirit and not fleſh? Wherefore then doſt thou doubt? Whatever God hath ſaid he can do: Believe he is a God, and thou wilt never ſay, How can theſe things be?

2. The

2. The Providence of God hath *Wiſdom* with it; he is the onely wiſe, he is the all wiſe God; *He knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.* 2 *Pet.* 2. 9. He knoweth what is good for his Saints, and when 'twill be in ſeaſon; he underſtandeth what is proper, and pertinent to every caſe. What's proper to every purpoſe, to every people, to every perſon, and for every ſeaſon; he knowes when 'tis a ſeaſon to abate, and when to exalt; when to afflict, and when to deliver; when to put on the yoak, and when to take off the yoak; When to pull down, and when to build up; every thing is beautiful in its ſeaſon. If mercies come *out of ſeaſon*, mercies would be no mercies; and if troubles come *in their ſeaſon*, troubles ſhould be no troubles; He knowes the beſt method, and means to his end; the fitteſt means; he ſees ſometimes, the unfitteſt to be the fitteſt; the moſt unlikely unpromiſing means, do often beſt ſerve Gods end.

Chriſtians, if you would receive every diſpenſation, as coming from the hands of the wiſe God; you would never quarrel with your lot, nor ſay of any thing that befalls, I might be happy, but this ſtands in my way. If you would give God leave to be wiſer than you, you would ſay where ever you are, *its good for me to be here*, this is my way to my reſt.

3. The Providence of God hath *faithfulneſs* with it. Pſal. 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and* [*truth*] *to them that keep his Covenant, and his Teſtimonies.* Pſal. 111. 8. His Works are *done in truth.* Gods Works may be ſaid to be done in truth, in a double ſence,

In

In Reality.
In Fidelity

1. In *Reality*, not in *ſpecie*, or in ſhew onely, but indeed. Gods Comforts, are Comforts indeed, Gods Salvation, is Salvation indeed. The Devil will come with his gifts, with his comforts, and deliverances; but they are for the moſt part, but *ſpectra*, like himſelf, ſhews, and apparitions; quite another thing, than what they ſeem to be: ſinners comforts, deliverances, enjoyments, wherewith the Devil feeds them, do leave them in as poor a caſe, and worſe than they found them: you will never thank the Devil for his kindneſs, when you have prov'd them what they are. If you do not find your ſelves as faſt bound, in the midſt of all your liberties; if you be not wrap'd up in as many ſorrows, after all the joys he hath procured to you; if the glittering glories, the glorious pleaſures he entices you by, and entertains you with, prove not traſh and dirt, and meer lies in the end, then ſay, the Devil hath forgotten his trade of lying: the Devils works will be even like himſelf, falſe and deceitful. But God is true, and all his works are done in truth.

2. In *Fidelity*, his Works are according to his Word. 1 King 8.24. *Thou haſt ſpoken with thy mouth, and haſt fulfilled with thine hand, in thy faithfulneſs, thou haſt afflicted me.* Pſal. 119. Not onely in thy faithfulneſs thou haſt ſaved me, in thy faithfulneſs thou haſt comforted me, in thy faithfulneſs thou haſt ſuccoured me; but in thy faithfulneſs thou haſt afflicted me; in thy faithfulneſs thou haſt humbled, and broken me, and caſt me down. The promiſe of God is, that we ſhall want nothing; we ſhall neither want his Staffe, nor his Rod; neither comforts

nor

not crosses; neither joys nor sorrows; we cannot well want either, and we shall want neither, because God is faithful. You may not onely write down with the Apostle, *God is faithfull, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able to bear*; but you may write also, God is faithful, and will not suffer you to want a temptation. When 'tis seasonable, your hearts shall be glad; and if need be, for a season you shall be in heavinesse. God is faithfull, he will ever be true to himself, and therefore to you. 2 Tim. 2. 9. *He abideth faithfull, he cannot deny himself.* Should he be false to his People he cannot be true to himself, to his purpose and promise; his Word is not yea and nay. God is not as a man, that he should lye, or the Son of man, that he should repent; that he should say, and unsay; that he should say, and not do; you may write Gods name upon every word he hath spoken, you may write his Name [I Am] upon all that he hath said: It shall be.

Now Christians, put these three Particulars together, and if you cannot spell out the conclusion out of them, *the Providence of God will certainly accomplish his good Purpose and Promise concerning you:* You are of little Understanding as well as of little Faith.

If God governs the World, and nothing comes to pass but by his Providence; if Providence governs according to Gods Purpose and Promise; if Providence cannot fail of accomplishing both;

If God be *Almighty* and can, if God be *Wise* and knowes how, if God be *Faithfull* and true, let the Devil if he can, with all his Sophistry, evade the Conclusion, *That he will certainly do all that good*

for

for you, which he hath purpoſed and promiſed: If God be not able to perform, he is not good; if he miſtake his way, if he uſe impertinent, improper means, he is not the All-wiſe God. If he do not actually perform what he is able, and knows how to do, when he hath ſaid it, he ceaſes to be the true God: So that the matter is brought plainly to this Iſſue; If God be God, if God be the All-wiſe God, if God be the true and faithful God, this Word which he hath ſpoken, [*All things ſhall work together for good to thoſe that love God,*] ſhall not fail of its accompliſhment in its ſeaſon.

Having thus proved the Doctrine, I ſhall, after I have added a few words by way of Caution, and anſwered an Objection or two againſt the Sence, I have given, of this Promiſe, and ſubjoyned a few particular Inferences, deſcend to the general Application.

1. By way of Caution.

1. *Limit not the Lord to your time and way*; God will make good his Word, but you muſt give him leave to take his own ſeaſon. *He that believeth ſhall not make haſte*; believe God, but do not prejudge nor precipitate, leſt you fall into temptation. Put no more into the promiſe, neither for matter nor circumſtance, than God hath put in it: put not that into the Promiſe, which God hath not put in it, leſt you miſs and come ſhort of that which God hath put in it. Let others miſtakes and miſcarriages be warnings to you: till God hath manifeſtly ſaid, do not you ſay, *This is the time*; build not your confidence on conjectures, your Faith on the ſtrongeſt Preſumptions; leſt your Faith prove but a fancy, and your confidence your confuſion: make not the Promiſe

miſe of God of none effect, by looking for its effect out of ſeaſon.

Believe not your ſelves into Infidelity: Conſider, *Acts* 1. 7. *It is not for you to know the times and the ſeaſons, which God hath put in his own Power.* Study the Word, and its Commentary, the Works of God, but be ſober in your Concluſions.

This you may ſafely depend upon, and this will be enough, if you have no more: God will make good his good Word to you, ſooner or later, in one time or other, in one way or other; in the beſt time, in the beſt way, in the appointed time, the Viſion ſhall ſpeak and ſhall not lye; *Habak.* 2. 3. *Though it may tarry, wait for it; becauſe it will ſurely come, and will not tarry*; At leaſt, at the end of the days, when you ſhall ſtand in your lott; when you ſhall be gotten on the banks of *Canaan*, and ſhall thence look back on the Promiſes and Providences of God, you ſhall ſee and ſay, God is faithful, there hath not failed one word of all that he hath promiſed: Now I underſtand, though once I could not, how every Wheel was turning, every Inſtrument was moving, every event was working towards my good and everlaſting welfare.

2. *Let not your expectation cauſe an abortion.* Let not your looking for mercy, hinder the working of your affliction: It is not ſeldom, and the Lord grant it be not too common a caſe, that our door of hope becomes a door of ſin. We do not ſet our ſelves with that ſeriouſneſs, to humble, to purge our ſelves from our iniquities, as we would do, did we apprehend our caſe more deſperate; our fears and our ſorrows have not their kindly work upon us our hope hinders it. We might have been more broken

hearted

hearted, had it not been for our hopes of building up: as it is with a perſon who conceives himſelf to be dying; he then falls to praying and repenting, and ſetting his heart in order, becauſe he muſt die; but upon a little hope of recovery, he lyes by his dying thoughts, and preparations.

Chriſtians, When ever you are under afflictions, take heed that your expectation of deliverance to be near, put it not ſo much the farther off. Watch narrowly over your ſelves, and look diligently to it, that your hope of redemption do not harden your hearts, nor hinder your humiliation and repentance. Hope in God, and wait for the Promiſe of his comming: But know, That till the Rod hath done its work, it is not like in mercy to be laid by; and it's better to be continued in the Furnace, than to be brought forth with your droſs unpurged away.

Againſt this bleſſed Truth, there are ſome Objections; as,

Object. 1. *Can it ever be ſaid, That the removall of the Goſpel, and the Preaching of it, can be for good?*

Sol. This is an hard Truth; but yet a Truth; That even this ſhall work for good to thoſe that love God.

1. It's true, That the removal of the Goſpel, and the Miniſtry of it, *is a moſt grievous Judgment*; and that which carries with it a greater evidence of wrath, and Divine diſpleaſure, againſt a People, than any thing that ever befalls them in this World. How great a Judgment it is, we may gueſs, if we obſerve thoſe Scripture-expreſſions by which it's ſet forth: It's called the *famine of the Word*, Amos 8. 11. *The glory departed*, 1 Sam. 4. *The Kingdom of Heaven*

taken

taken away, Matth. 6. 41. *The Salvation of God ſent away*, Acts 28. and can there be any thing worſe befall a People? a Soul-famine, an Eclipſe of their ſpiritual glory, the ſhutting up of the Kingdom of Heaven, the carrying away of the Salvation of God: What worſe thing can come unto them? It's a great wonder there ſhould be no deeper Senſe of this moſt dreadful of evils, than is moſtly found: Men little underſtand what they *do*, who either in a way of *merit*, or *inſtrumentallity*, procure, and bring on this plague; and few underſtand, or are ſenſible, what they herein *ſuffer*; to be an *inſtrument* in this helliſh work, is *an office for a Devill*; and the *ſuffering* of ſuch a plague, (to them that underſtand it) is *an hell above ground*. This darkneſs is the very ſame for kind, with the darkneſs of Hell; as the light of the Goſpel is the ſame in kind, with the everlaſting light: as glory under age; ſo is this thick darkneſs, *in ſpecie*, and *in ſemine*, the darkneſs of the pit. Oh, what an hell of wickedneſs doth this World then become! the Devil is then in his Region; is let looſe, rules the World at pleaſure, deceives, devours, deſtroyes Souls, without contradiction; takes them captive at his will, carries them down by whole ſhoals to deſtruction: Thoſe that obſerve what a World there is, where the Goſpel is not; what oaths, curſes, blaſphemies, belluine luſts then abound: what Lions, Tygers, wild Bulls, wild Boars, Men then become one to another, need not be to ſeek for an Argument, to prove there is an Hell; they ſee an Hell above-ground.

Theſe dark and diſmal ſeaſons, are the Devill's *Marts*, where he may vent his Helliſh Wares, his ſnares,

ſnares, and temptations, his deceits and deluſions and every abominable thing, *by whole ſale*: there's nothing ſo falſe, ſo vile, and abominable, but he can put it off at pleaſure; Adultery, Drunkenneſs, Witchcraft, Sodomy, Buggery, Blaſphemy, Idolatry, Atheiſm, any thing that Sathan hath to offer, hee'l find Cuſtomers enough to receive: and the truth is, the *Devil* may ſpare his pains; men then need not a *Devil* to damn them, they'l do it faſt enough of their own accords.

Oh 'twere happy, if *Saints* were ſo buſie in improving their Light, to haſten them Heaven-wards, as Sinners do their Darkneſs, to hurry them to Hell. Oh the ſad proofs, that the World affords of this Dreadful Truth: Look into all the dark Corners of the Earth, eſpecially there where there hath been Light, and ſee, if you find not all this fully proved to your hand. Can he then be accounted a Chriſtian, whoſe heart doth not tremble at the Thoughts and the Fears of ſuch a ſore Judgment? He is both dark and dead indeed, to whom ſuch a Miſt is not as the firſt-born of Death, or the King of Terrours.

Chriſtians, if ever this ſhould be your caſe, make not light of it; and take heed, how ſad ſoever it may ſeem in its firſt approach, that no Tract of Time do wear off the ſence of it.

Thoſe that are weary of the Goſpel, that cry out of too much Preaching, that are ſick of the Light that ſhines unto them, you may know by what hath been ſaid, what Judgment to have of them.

But is it not ſtrange, that there ſhould be any ſuch? That thoſe that have lived in the Light, and ſeen ſomthing, what difference there is between Light and Darkneſs, ſhould yet love Darkneſs, ra-

ther than Light? Is it not yet more ſtrange, that any that pretend to be *ſet up for Lights*, ſhould *be for Darkneſs*? That the *Prophets* ſhould be againſt *Prophecying*; That the *Pulpits* ſhould ring againſt *Preaching*? Some there are, that are not aſhamed to tell us, that hence come all our miſchiefs and miſeries; to tell us, and to ſtand to it, that there's now, in ſuch a Land as this, little need of *Preaching*; that it had its uſe in the firſt publiſhing and planting of the Goſpel; but now that the Goſpel is receiv'd, and embraced, and competently underſtood, there's now little more need of *Preaching*, *Praying*, and *Reading* may now ſerve turn. I would put in a word or two to ſuch.

No need of *Preaching*? Why? Is *the end* of *Preaching* accompliſh'd? Till *the end* be attained, there's ſtill need, that the *means* be continued: And what was the end of *Preaching*? Was it men's *Inſtruction* onely, to bring them to the knowledg of Chriſt, to turn them from Darkneſs to Light? Was it not for their *Converſion* alſo, to turn them from the power of *Sathan* unto God? Yea, and their *Edification* and Building up in Holineſs to Salvation? Let theſe following Scriptures be conſulted. *Act.* 26. 18. *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13. the Apoſtle *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12, 13. told thoſe Chriſtians to whom he wrote, that he would, and he thought it meet ſo to do, to *put them in remembrance*, as long as he lived, and to *ſtir them up* to their Duty; though, ſays he, *You know and be eſtabliſhed in the preſent Truth*. You ſay, you need no more *Preaching*, the *Preacher* can tell you no more than you know already; and might not theſe have better ſaid it, when the Apoſtle acknowledgeth of them, that they did know; and more than that, were eſtabliſh'd in

thoſe

those very Truths, he meant, to continue Preaching to them? And yet he tells them, it's meet they be still put in remembrance of them: Sure *Peter's Authority* weighs not so much with these men, as his, that pretends to sit in *Peter's Chair*: But hath the Gospel indeed done its Work, and reached its End? Witness the Objectors own cases. Let not onely their Lewdness and Impenitency, but their Ignorance and Unbelief, come in and testifie, whether it hath or no. They that have most need themselves, are they that say, *There's no more need of Preaching*. There needs no more Argument, to stop such Mouthes, but the shewing them themselves: Or if it should have done its work upon you, yet hath it done its work upon all? Are there no Unbelievers left? Have all men Faith? *Faith comes by Hearing*: *and how shall they hear without a Preacher*? If you say, they have *Bibles* to instruct them, and their own *Consciences* to preach to them, I answer;

First, for their Bibles, two Things:

1. Those that are no Friends to the Pulpit, are none of the best Friends to the Bible: Those that would not that the people should hear, care not how little they read the Scriptures: And be sure, whenever Preaching is let fall, the Bible will in a little while be laid aside.

2. Understandest thou what thou readest? How canst thou without a Guide? He knows but little of the Scriptures, that doth not understand, that they are hard to be understood. There are, the Apostle tells us, δυσνόητα in the Scriptures, Things hard to be understood: As there are many δυσνόητα to all that read, so to many that read, all are so. The Vulgar can as well read the Scriptures, without their own

Eyes, as understand them without the Preacher's Lips. Till we come to hold, that *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion*, or that *Images are Lay-mens Gospell*; till then, let it be granted as necessary, that the Preacher's Lips preserve Knowledg.

2. For *Conscience*, let the Word, at least, be preached so long, till it be made manifest in the *Consciences* of the Hearers: That *Conscience* that hath not been sufficiently preached to, will prove an insufficient *Preacher*: Let preaching be continued, till the Word be manifested in the *Consciences* of all the Hearers; and if you will needs have it so, then let it be forborn.

Secondly, Hath the *Devil* yet given over Preaching, and are the *Preachers* yet silent? Hath the *Devil* yet given over his Preaching? his deceiving Souls, his perverting the good ways of the Lord, and discouraging persons from walking in them? Sure there's need that Christ be preached, while there is a Devil that impeaches him. Hath the Devil them that preach him every day, and must not Christ have them that preach him, at least, every Sabbath-day? may *once a moneth*, or *once a quarter*, be enough for these, when every day, and all the day-long, does scarce suffice for those? When, or where are evill men silent? Are they not preaching daily? in the House, in the Streets, in the Taverns, on the Stage, in the Stews? Preaching by their Oaths, their Curses, by their Lies, by their Scoffs, by their Habits, by their Cups, by their Whores, and almost by all their words and works? And is there no need that Christ be any longer preached any where, when the Devil is preached every where? If in such a case the *Preachers* of Christ should altogether hold their peace, might

might we not expect that the very ſtones would cry out? This is but a ſeaſonable command. Let Faith and Holineſs, firſt have none found that preach againſt them, before thoſe that preach them, be concluded, ſuch as may well be ſpared: But what need we reaſon any longer, in a caſe ſo plain, wherein I can have no Adverſaries, but ſuch as the Apoſtle had, when he fought with Beaſts at *Epheſus*. Whoſoever is an Adverſary to Preaching, is either an Infidel, or a Brute. I ſhall onely leave one word for ſuch to chew upon, and ſo leave them and their cauſe to the Judgment of God, *Act.* 13.46. *It was neceſſary that the Word of God ſhould have been firſt ſpoken to you; but becauſe you put it from you, and judge your ſelves unworthy of everlaſting Life, Lo we turn unto the Gentiles?* Let all back-friends to Preaching, plauſe ſadly upon that Word; you have prevented the Judgment of God, by putting the Word from you, you have given your ſelves your own Sentence, you have judged your ſelves unworthy of Everlaſting Life. Well, by what hath been ſaid, notwithſtanding all that can be ſaid againſt it, it appears, that the removal of the Goſpel, and the preaching of it, is a grievous Judgment.

2. This grievous Judgment ſhall yet work to the good of *Saints*: That which comes in Wrath on ſome, may be in Mercy to others: 'Tis the ignorant, the unconverted, the unbelieving part of men, on whom the Vengeance of this Judgment falls: 'Tis thoſe that are weary of the Word, that can worſe it. Sinners, you that ſay to the *Seers*, ſee not; to the *Prophets*, prophecie no more to us; let us alone, we have enough of this preaching; if God once ſay, as you ſay, *Let it be according to their word*, 'tis your

Souls are like to go for it: And 'tis not the leaſt aggravation of the Sorrows of the *Saints*, the miſery they ſee, hereby coming on you: As for themſelves, (that I may anſwer more diſtinctly)

1. The Goſpel ſhall never be *totally* removed from them; they ſhall never ſee days of Famine: If they never again hear the joyful Sound from without, they ſhall have it within. The Word which they have receiv'd, ſhall be in them a Well of Water, ſpringing up unto Eternal Life: If the Showers and the Rain fail, yet the Spring which is within them, ſhall ſupply that want: If they have no Bible in the Houſe, no preaching in the Pulpit, yet they have a Bible in their Hearts, a Preacher in their Breaſts, that ſhall inſtruct and comfort them. *Pharaoh*'s Dream, and the *Interpretation* of it, ſhall be to the *Egyptians*, and not to *Iſrael*. The lean Kine ſhall not devour the fat ones; there is a *Store-houſe*, from whence they ſhall be ſupply'd.

Whatever ſcarcity there be, this is certain not one of them ſhall want a *Viaticum*, to bring them to their Journeys end. God will not ſuffer one of his Elect to ſtarve or periſh in the way: There ſhall not fail means of one kind or another, till the whole Body be perfected and built up: *Till (we all) come unto a perfect Man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.*

2. That *Scarcity*, that does at any time befal them, ſhall happen to them for the better, and not for the worſe.

1. For who knows, when ever the Miniſtry is removed, but it may be in order to a greater Glory at it's Return? Perhaps, God's ſencing away Paſtors from a People, may be as *Paul*'s abſence from the *Romans*,

Romans, that they may return, *in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the Goſpel:* Or as *Oneſimus* his departing from *Philemon*: Perhaps, they therefore depart for a ſeaſon, that they may be received for ever: Or, if this ſhould not be the caſe of any particular Church, if they ſhould return no more; yet,

2. Their want of means ſhall ſupply their want of means; their want of means ſhall be their means When they have no *Preacher*, their empty Pulpit ſhall preach to them; this moſt ſmarting of Rods will have its voice. If they have no longer the Light with them, their Darkneſs ſhall inſtruct them; if they want their [*burning*] Lights, the very Cold ſhall preſerve and increaſe their inward vigour; the wickedneſs of others, ſhall make them more holy; the violence of evil men upon ſin, ſhall enkindle their zeal for God; the darkneſs that's here below, ſhall make them to live more above, and all this ſhall make to their fuller Reward. 'Tis a greater Vertue to keep up the Heart, to keep on our way, where there is a want, than where there are abundance of means and helps; and an higher Vertue ſhall have a greater Reward.

3. The failing of the Word, will bring back to their Memories, and upon their own Hearts, that which they have receiv'd; and as the emptineſs of the Stomach, will cauſe a ſecond and better Concoction, and turn it into better nouriſhment; when there are no more Loaves, they'l gather up the Fragments, that nothing be loſt; the leſs there is, more to be had; the more reckoning, and the better uſe they will make of what they have; their preſent want, will be a rebuke of their former wantonneſs: their want of Remembrancers, will help their Mercies, and

whet their Appetites. Every old truth, that hath been too much laid by, will then be pretious.

4. Whenever ordinary means fail, God will either find extraordinary means fail, God will either find extraordinary, or else will feed them more immediately from himself. *Psal.* 34.9. God hath promised, that *those that fear the Lord, shall want no good thing*. If that be meant of temporal good things, yet sure, it will yield us an Argument, that will reach the present case. If God will provide for their Carkases, much more for their Souls. If God will supply them with less necessaries, then doubtless he will not be wanting, in whats absolutely necessary. *Psal.* 23.1,2,3. *The Lord is my Shepheard, I shall not want*; and so on, throughout the Psalm. *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me, all the dayes of my life; and I shall dwell in the House of the Lord for ever.*

Here we have the *Psalmists* conclusion, and it's foundation; or his confidence, and it's ground; his foundation, or ground is, the Lord is my Shepheard, his conclusion and confidence is, I shall not want; that is, neither for Body, nor Soul; as appears by the following part of the *Psalm*. If *Davids* Logick, and his Faith too, does not fail him, the conclusion is firm; let the Lord be his Shepheard, and he shall not know Famine or want.

Gods relation to his people, is their security, for a sufficient provision in all times. If the Lord be their Shepheard, he must see them fed; he must either find them those that shall, or do it himself. He must either find them Pastors, or be their Pastor; He must either provide them, or be their Pasture. If ordinary means fail, he must find extraordinary

dinary, if both fail, he muſt be inſtead of means to them.

Here two things.

1. That God ſtands engaged, as the Shepheard of his people, where ordinary means fail, either to provide them extraordinary, or to feed them more immediately from himſelf.

2. That extraordinary means, or no means, when God brings his People to it, will be better than their ordinary means,

1. That God ſtands engaged, as the Shepheard of his People, where ordinary means fail, either to provide them extraordinary, or to feed them more immediately, from himſelf. Feed them he muſt, or he cannot be faithful; and if means fail, he muſt ſupply that want one way or other. Now God is faithful, and will not ſee his Sheep to ſtarve. *Iſa.* 41. 17, 18. *When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their Tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of* Iſrael *will not forſake them. I will open Rivers in high places, and Fountains in the midſt of the Vallies, I will make the Wilderneſs a Pool of Water, and the dry Land, Springs of Water.* Oh what a good Word is here, for the poor Saints to live upon, in hard times. It is interpreted, to have an immediate reference to the outward, and yet a ſpecial reſpect alſo to the ſpiritual wants and diſtreſſes. And it will appear, if we compare it, with the like expreſſions. Chap. 44. 3. *I will poure water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground, I will poure my Spirit on thy Seed, and my Bleſſing upon thine off-ſpring.*

From the former Scriptures note,

1. That

1. That the poor People of God, may ſometimes be (as to the viſible Soul-proviſions) but in a poor caſe. Needy, and hungry, and thirſty, their hearts fainting, their tongues failing for thirſt, and their waters dryed up. [If they ſeek water, and there be none.]

2. All the wants and ſtraits of the Saints, are before the Lord. [I the Lord will hear.] Chriſtians, though thoſe that ſhould, will not, yet he that can, will hear the cryes of your Souls; all your faintings, and pantings, and longings for the water of life, are before your eyes, and come up into the eares of the Lord of Sabbath.

3. God hath more wayes than one, to relieve the wants, and refreſh the bowels of his hungry ones. He hath extraordinary means for extraordinary caſes. If they can find no common Rivers, he will open, or make new Rivers. The high places, the dry places, the very Rock will yield a River, when God commands it.

4. Gods extraordinary Proviſions ſhall not be ſcant, and penurious, but rich and plentifull. 'Tis not *ſome drops*, or now and then *a draught*, a little to ſtay the longing, or barely enough to keep them alive; he prepares them Rivers, Fountains, Pools, Springs of water, [I will open Rivers in the high places, Fountains in the Vallies, *&c.*] Whereever they be caſt, in the high places, in the Vallies, in the Wilderneſs, in the dry Lands, whereever they be caſt, I will cauſe Proviſion enough to meet them; though they have neither Bag nor Bottle, nor any thing to carry with them, they ſhall not want; the River ſhall meet them, Springs ſhall ariſe and break forth to them.

5. They

5. They are not the wanting, but the thirſting, the ſeeking Souls, whom God will ſupply. When the poor and needy [ſeek] water, and there is none. Oh *Chriſtians*! how many poor are there, that ſit down by their poverty; who if they ſtarve, yet will not beg, their emptineſs hath taken away their Appetites. Theſe are ſad Souls; 'tis a ſad ſight, to behold a company of hunger-bitten Souls, ſit weeping, and ſighing, ſeeking after the Bread, and Water of life, and finding none; but to ſee empty, and yet no hungry; fainting, and yet not panting Souls; to ſee Souls even dying away for want, and yet not deſiring or craving a ſupply, this is a much ſorer ſpectacle. *A ſtarveling thirſtleſs Soul, is next to a Ghoſt.*

Well, if ever ſuch Souls find, who never ſeek water, 'tis more than God hath promiſed them. 'Tis they that ſeek water, to whom God will open a River.

6. What ever difficulty there be, to furniſh the hungry Saints, with a ſufficiency of Proviſion, yet one way or other, it ſhall be done. I [the Lord] will hear. I [the God] of *Iſrael*, will not forſake them. Upon me be all their wants. I am [God] and can, I am [their God] the God of *Iſrael* and will, provide for them. They muſt and ſhall be provided for; whatever courſe I be put to take, I muſt not ſee them ſtarve.

The Lord will not be wanting to them, if his Word be not heard, his Works ſhall ſpeak; if Preachers cannot, Providence ſhall preach to them; if their friends cannot, their enemies, their ſtripes, their wounds, their rods, ſhall inſtruct them. *Thy Rod and thy Staffe comfort me.* If they have no other,

other, th Sun, Moon, and Stars, the Fouls of the Air, the Beaſts of the Field, ſhall be their Prophets, and Apoſtles. If all ſhould fail, yet the Spirit of the Lord ſhall not fail, to be their Teacher and Comforter.

2. Extraordinary means have more in them, than ordinary, and no means more than means.

1. Extraordinary means, when ordinary cannot be had, are ſweeter, and better feeding for the Saints, then ordinary would be. The leſs of the Creature, the more of God; the leſs of common Providence, the more of ſpecial Grace. Water out of the Rock, was more pretious than out of the River; the Manna of the Wilderneſs, was (to them that underſtood it) better than the Milk of *Canaan*. *Elijah* never made better meals, than what he got out of the Ravens mouth. I have heard of a Woman, in great diſtreſs of Soul, who received comfort, when the *Word* was brought her by the mouth of a child, which ſhe had failed of receiving from the mouths of many excellent Miniſters.

2. No means, often prove better than means; when I ſay, no means, I do not underſtand ſimply none, means they ſhall have, of one kind or other; their underſtandings, their memories, their ſecret duties, Prayer, Meditation, *&c.* but by no means, I underſtand nothing from without, no Ordinances, Friends, Societies, Books, *&c.* Gods feeding of a Soul, more immediately, is much ſweeter, then when he ſends Proviſion by the hand of another; the *Samaritans* hearing Chriſts Words, from his own mouth, was much more to them, than the ſame words reported by the Woman. *Dulcius ex ipſo fonte.* Water is the purer, the nearer the Fountain; the Bread

that

that comes down from Heaven, is better Bread, than that which grows up out of the Earth, though that be originally from Heaven alſo. By how much the more immediately our comforts come from Heaven, by ſo much the more they have of Heaven in them. If upon the failing of publick Communion, it be made up ſo much the more in ſecret, ſure the Saints have no reaſon to complain. And whether this be not ſo, let the Priſons, into which the Saints have been ſometimes caſt, the Wilderneſs into which they have been ſometimes baniſhed; let *Elihu's* Songs in the night, *Peters*, *Pauls*, *Silaghs* Songs in the Priſon, in the Stocks, ſtand forth and teſtifie. If Priſon joyes, and exile comforts, have not been often both fuller and ſweeter to them, than when they have rolled in *Manna*, and lived in the fulneſs, and freedom of all helps and means; then not a few Chriſtians, have either miſtaken, or miſ-reported their experiences. To pretend to live above Ordinances, whileſt God affords them, is a wickedneſs that ſome men have to repent of; but where God denies them, he doth, he will provide a better ſubſiſtence without them.

Now lay all this together, and then you will ſee, that even this alſo, this moſt grievous of Judgments, the famine of the Word, when ever it befalls, ſhall work for good to thoſe that love God.

Chriſtians, chear up your hearts; whatever drought, or dearth, may fall upon the World, you are provided for, you ſhall have enough. If the ſhoures fail without, you have within you, that which ſhall ſpring up to eternall life. If your ſtreams ſhould be dryed up, if your Paſtures ſhould be trodden down, you have a God, that will be both your Paſtor and Paſture. If the Rivers fail you, the Rock

ſhall

ſhall ſupply you; what you want in ordinary, you may look to be made up in extraordinary means. The drying up of the waters, ſhall but drive you up to the Spring-head. If ever the Stars fail you, God ſhall but exchange *Star-light* for *Sun-light*; while there's light in the Sun, you ſhall not walk in darkneſs. See but to this, make ſure that this God is yours, and he muſt find out a comfortable feeding for you; if you can but ſay *Davids* firſt words after him, *the Lord is my Shepherd*; you may then with confidence, ſay the whole Pſalm after him. *I ſhall not want, he will make me to lie down in green Paſtures; he will lead me by the ſtill Waters; though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evill, thy Rod and thy Staff ſhall comfort me. Thou ſhalt prepare me a Table in the preſence of mine Enemies; Surely Goodneſs and Mercy ſhall follow me, all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the Houſe of the Lord for ever.*

2. There is another Objection, that ſeems to have one difficulty in it. Suppoſe a Saint to fall into *Diſtraction*, and thereby to be deprived utterly of the uſe of his Reaſon, and ſo to live and die.

How can it be imagined, that this can work for his good, either in this World, or the World to come? Can any good ariſe, out of an incapacity of any longer doing, or receiving good, or patiently ſuffering Evil? Can either his Grace here, or his Glory hereafter, be increaſed or advanced, by a man's being converted into a mere Bruit?

1. There's no doubt at all, but this may make for the *Churches good*: Is there nothing that others may learn out of ſuch a ſad *Providence*? If others may reap good by my evil, is it nothing to me? May it not

not be ſaid to be good for any particular Saint, to bear the ſoreſt Affliction, by which the Church may have benefit? He hath not much of a Saint, to whom, if it were afore-hand propoſed, whether for the benefit of the Church, he would be content, if God ſee it good, to fall into ſuch a calamity: He hath little of a Saint, that would deliberately refuſe it. Doubtleſs, a ſincere Chriſtian, who would count his uſefulneſs to the good of the whole Body, to be his good, would ſay even concerning ſuch a *Meſſage*, were it brought to him, *Good is the Word of the Lord:* And that which afore-hand, he would judge to be good for him to ſubmit to, may it not be good for him to be under?

2. It may alſo be more directly for his particular *perſonal good*. For,

1. It may do him the ſame good, which *Death* will do for him: Concerning which, the Apoſtle ſays it is yours, 1 *Cor.* 3. that is, it is for your advantage: It may *take him from the evil to come*; from thoſe Sorrows, and that Trouble of Heart, which God might fore-ſee falling upon him, by any calamities, coming either on the Church in general, or himſelf, or Family in particular: which being deprived of his Reaſon, and power to reflect on, he cannot feel, or in the leaſt be afflicted by. If you Reply, *But the Remedy is worſe than the Diſeaſe*: To be uſeleſs and unſerviceable is leſs eligible, than to be ſorrowful and afflicted: Will any man chuſe to fall into a *Lethargie*, or *Apoplexie*, becauſe 'twill ſecure him from the Torment of a *Feaver*? If there be any weight in this *Reply*, I ſhall adde a farther *Anſwer*; which, if I misjudge not, will cut off all *Replyes*.

2. Who

2. Who knows, *what Sins and Temptations* he might have fallen into, and fallen by, had not the Lord by this means prevented it; he might possibly have been a Back-slider, have fallen into gross sin, by which he might have been a Terrour to himself, and a Scandal to the Gospel; and is it not good for him, that this is prevented? Is not that *Affliction a Mercy*, which secures from such *Iniquity*?

Who can say it is not thus? that the Lord foresaw he would have fallen into sin, and for prevention, brought him into this Affliction: Who can say, it is not thus? If none can, then this is no Objection. If you Reply, you say [*it may be*] this is the case; and I may as well say, [*it may be not*]; there might be no such thing, that God fore-saw, as the Reason of this *Providence*. 'Tis but a *Conjecture*, and an *Uncertainty*, when you have made the most of it: Be it so; yet it will fully answer my end: I am not now proving, *that all things work for good to the Saints*, that's sufficiently done already: But you are objecting against it; and till you prove your Objection, which you can never do, unless you prove, that this is not the case; you must give me leave again to tell you, your Objection comes to nothing.

And so at length you see this Blessed, Glorious, Comfortable Truth stands it's Ground, and Triumphs over whatever hath any Shadow of Contradiction to it.

By the way, learn hence two things:

1. Rejoyce in this *Promise of God*: Hath the *Lord* put in thy name here, let thine Heart say, *It is enough*. Be more joyful in this, that God hath thus undertaken the Care of thee, than if God had wholly

ly put thee to thine own hand; giving thee power to help, and liberty to chuſe for thy ſelf. In what wilt thou rejoyce, if not in this, that the whole Creation are ingaged to do thee a kindneſs, to help thee into the poſſeſſion of thy God? Thou mayſt now not onely ſubmit to, but thankfully embrace every *Providence*, knowing upon what Errand it comes to thee; for good, and not for hurt. Thou mayſt now triumph, not onely in the *Conſternations*, but in the *Triumphs* of thine enemies. Whether they ride over thy back, or thou tread on their neck, 'tis all one, the iſſue will be the ſame. Thy Troubles and thy Conſolations differ only in their Countenance; with what ever grim face thy afflictions look, there are ſmiles under; learn to ſee through them, and thou mayſt ſee light on the further ſide. Believe this Word, thou mayſt read it written upon every thing that befalls thee: there's no Meſſenger that comes, but brings this promiſe in his hand, *Even this ſhall work for good.* Read it, and rejoyce.

2. *Lay thy ſelf down quietly under it.* No more perplexing or diſtracting cares, what ſhall become of thee; no more unwarrantable ſhifting for thy ſelf: Let God alone. Shift not for thy ſelf, leſt God leave thee to thine own ſhifts. Let not the violence of evil men diſturb thy *Peace*, or provoke thee to *unpeaceableneſs*. What ever provocations thou mayſt have, avenge not thy ſelf, neither give place unto wrath, murmuring, or fears. In thy patience poſſeſs thy Soul, thy God, and his good Word: Thy ſtrength is to ſit ſtill. Stand ſtill and ſee the Salvation of God; thou haſt nothing to do but to be *Holy*, let that be thine only care; thy God will ſee to it thou ſhalt be *happy*: he is faithful that

hath promiſed. Love God, and leave thy ſelf and thy whole Intereſt in this bleſſed Word, *All things ſhall work to thee for good.*

By this time you ſee ſomething of the Riches of this Promiſe: God is in the promiſe; the God of Peace, the God of Power, the God of Patience, the God of Hope; the heart of God, the help of God, the preſence of God; by vertue whereof, all that ever befalls them ſhall work for their good. Methinks the hearing of this Promiſe opened, ſhould ſet your Souls, and all that is within you a crying out, Oh that this were my portion! Where ever my Lott do fall, as to outward things, though in a priſon, though in a deſert, though on a dung-hill; let the lott of my Soul lye in this Promiſe, *The God of Peace ſhall be with you.* Why Brethren, will you take up with Godlineſs: you have learned, and received, and heard the Word of the Lord; the Word of Faith, the Word of righteouſneſs, and holineſs, will you hearken to, will you obey theſe words? Theſe things do, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you.

Oh what fooliſh Creatures are we, that ever we ſhould be afraid of Religion, afraid of Holineſs, afraid to own, obey, and follow God and his holy wayes. What unreaſonable fears are theſe, to thoſe that believe the Scriptures? If the Scriptures be true, this is the only way, this following God in holineſs, to put your ſelves out of all danger, to put your ſelves into the heart, arms, preſence, protection, of the Almighty God of Heaven and Earth.

Oh that I could perſwade you in thither, and there leave you; if you are once in the Lords Arms, you are ſafe enough, into what ever hands you fall.

Uſe.

Vſe. By way of Application, let me once more ſpeak a few words,

1. To the Ungodly.

2. To the Godly.

1. To the Ungodly; my work with them ſhall be to perſwade and direct them, how to get into this peacefull and bleſſed ſtate: Amongſt the ungodly,

1. There are ſome who are *far from the Kingdome of Heaven*; as,

1. Thoſe upon whom the Miniſtry of the Goſpel hath *done nothing at all*; that miſerable forlorn multitude of the *groſly ignorant*; who as they were born blind, have had all their dayes ſuch a miſt of thick darkneſs abiding upon them, that they are uncapible, without a miracle, of being ſavingly wrought upon. Speak unto them of Faith in Chriſt, of Repentance unto life, of obeying the Goſpel, in the plaineſt way poſſible, and you will be as a *Barbarian* to them, as one of a ſtrange Language, they know not what you ſay; if you ſhould ſpeak *Greek* or *Latine* to them, they would underſtand it as well, as the plaineſt truths of the Goſpel: A poor Miniſter of Chriſt may break his heart, and rend his bowells, in mourning over them; may draw forth his Soul in the moſt melting expreſſions of his compaſſions to them, may break his brains, in ſtudying how to convey a little light into them, and yet cannot help them, cannot make them to underſtand ſo much, as that they underſtand nothing. Their Minds are ſo wholly blinded by the god of this World, that the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, though it ſhine round about them, cannot find ſo much as a crannie into their hearts; but being alienated from

the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, they give up themſelves to laſciviouſneſs to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs; walking in the luſts of their hearts, after the courſe of this World, in riot, luxury, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquettings, covetouſneſs, lying, blaſphemies, and abominable adulteries, and Idolatries; and yet remain without any conſcience of ſin, or fear of their danger; being as natural bruit Beaſts, as if they were made for ſlaughter and deſtruction.

Are there none ſuch in this place? Doth not the Earth every where groan, our Land mourn, our Congregations travail in pain? Is not this Congregation black'd and burthen'd with ſuch miſerable creatures; who after all the inſtructions, counſells, wooings, warnings, threatnings, and Judgments of God, which have been in their ears, and before their eyes, remain to this day a ſtupid, blockiſh, brutiſh generation, without the leaſt ſenſe of their ſin, or wiſh to be delivered from it?

Oh you blind and dark Souls, conſider and underſtand, if it be poſſible, theſe two Scriptures, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3, 4. *If our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to thoſe that are loſt. In whom the god of this World hath blinded the minds of thoſe that believe not, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel ſhould ſhine unto them.* This darkneſs is *from Hell*; the Prince of darkneſs hath held you under your blindneſs; and this darkneſs *leads to hell* to the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever: You are loſt, you are loſt Souls, loſt for ever, if the Goſpel leave you in this ſtate of blindneſs in which you have ſo ſecurely continued to this day. *Iſa.* 27. 11. *It is a people of no underſtanding, therefore he that made them will*

will not have mercy on them, he that formed them will ſhew them no favour.

2. Thoſe upon whom the Goſpel hath ſeemed to have done its work; but it is its *ſtrange work.*

There are two works which the Goſpel doth: ſome it enlightens; others it ſmites with blindneſs: ſome it ſoftens; others it ſeals up under hardneſs: ſome it gains over to Chriſt; others it gives up to the unbelief and impenitence of their hearts. *Iſa.6.* 10. *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes; leſt they ſee with their eyes,&c.* Go and preach to this people, but preach them into hardneſs and blindneſs: becauſe they refuſed to ſee or hear, let the light put out their eyes; let the joyful ſound ſtrike them deaf, and ſtop their ears: never leave hammering them, till thou haſt hammered them into *rocks*, or *anvills.* Some there are that have ſo trifled with Convictions, baffled Conſcience, and ſuffer'd their luſts ſo to reſiſt and bear down their light; that have had ſo many heats, and colds; ſo many thawings and freezings; that have taken up ſo many purpoſes, and made ſo many promiſes, and yet all comes to nothing; that the Goſpel hath received a Charge from the Lord, to make an end of its work: Go, ſayes God, and make an end with theſe men; I'le be mocked by them no more; I'le be trifled and dallied with by them no longer; wound them no more, fright them no more, perſwade them no longer; make their hearts fat, their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes, and give them up to their hearts luſts, that they may walk in their own counſells, and fill up the meaſure of their iniquities.

you, that after all the warnings you have received from the Lord, and after ſome workings of them, ſometimes upon your Conſciences, are yet going after your Luſts, proſtituting your ſelves to your beſtiuine and ſenſual pleaſures, filling up daily the meaſure of your iniquities. Oh tremble, and conſider ſadly, whether this be not likely to be your caſe; that the Goſpel hath even done with you, and given you over unto an impenitent heart, and reprobate mind. In hope, that how near ſoever you are to this dreadful ſtate, you may be yet one ſtep at leaſt ſhort of it, I ſhall this once more adventure a few words upon you, together with them that I have already mentioned: And firſt let me reaſon a little with you.

1. Art thou one of them that obey the Goſpel, or not? Art thou one of them that love God, one of the called, according to his purpoſe, or not? Art thou not an Alien, an Adverſary againſt God, and a Rebel againſt his Word? Let thy Conſcience ſpeak, let thy ways ſpeak, let thine Oaths, and thy Drunkenneſs, and thine Adulteries, thy ſcoffing at God, and his holy ways, thy hating his Inſtructions, and kicking at his Reproofs, thy hardnings againſt his Calls, thy treacherous dealings in his Covenant, and the Vows of God that are upon thee, let theſe ſpeak what thou art: Is this that which God hath choſen and called thee to? Are theſe the Things thou haſt learned, and received, and heard of him? Did he ever ſay, *Theſe things do, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you*? Thou needeſt no other Conviction, than that of *Iſraels*, *Jer.* 2. 23. *How canſt thou ſay, I am not polluted? See thy way in the Valley, and know what thou haſt done.* How canſt thou ſay, that thou art not a Wretch? With what Face canſt thou deny, but thou art an Enemy of

of God, and of all Righteouſneſs? See thy way in the Valley, trace the Footſteps of thy Life; behold thy practices and thy courſe: Sure thou art very blind, if thou behold thy ſelf in this Glaſs, and doeſt not ſee thy Face, as the Face of a Devil.

There are ſome, whom it may be harder work to convince, who have the Face of a Chriſtian, the Tongue of a Saint, but within, the Heart of a Beaſt. Hypocrites are as hard to be convinced, as Hypocriſie is hard to be detected.

But thou who carryeſt thy wicked Heart in thy Forehead, upon thy Tongue, upon the Palms of thine Hands, and in the very prints of thy Feet, whoſe Malice againſt God and his Holineſs, may be read in every look, in every word, in every Line of thy Life: needeſt thou any further proof, that thou art not of God? Thou mayſt as well put me to prove, that *Hell* is not *Heaven*, that the *Devil* is no *Saint*, as that thou art no Chriſtian. Doſt [*thou*] love God, art thou under the hope of the Promiſe? Ask thy Wayes man, and let theſe tell thee.

2. Doeſt thou mean to keep at this diſtance from God to the Death? Doeſt thou in earneſt? Is there nothing in thoſe rich Promiſes, that have been laid before thee, which thou canſt wiſh 'twere thine? Is there no ſuch word in thine heart, *Oh that my Lot were here*! Art thou content thy name ſhould be left out for ever? Is there ſo little in the peace of God, that thou canſt ſell it for the pleaſures of ſin? Art thou content that nothing ſhould proſper with thee, but that every thing ſhould be a Gin, and a Snare, and a Curſe to thee? Art thou content, that the Pit ſhould be thy place, Eternal Wrath thy portion, and that every Creature, every Comfort, every Croſs that

comes, ſhould give thee a pluck down from *Heaven*, and a kick towards *Hell*? Canſt thou think they mean thee any thing elſe, when all does but harden thee in thy ſin, and make thee kick againſt thy God? Art thou ſo unwilling to leave thy ſins, for the hope of the Promiſe of God, that thou art content to give up thy hopes for the love of thy ſins? Dareſt thou ſay, *Let me have my part in the pleaſures and contentments of this life, and I am content to relinquiſh my part in Chriſt? Let God let me alone in my ſins, and let him damn my Soul? Let me live at my eaſe, and my liberty, and let my name be blotted out of the Book of Life: I am content to take my place, and my lot, among the damned in another World, ſo I may have my pleaſure with them in this World?* And doeſt thou ſay leſs, or other than this, whileſt thou refuſeſt, or reſolveſt againſt following thy God? He that refuſes to accept of the Redemption of Chriſt, upon the holy Terms, upon which it is offer'd, ſays, in effect, I am loſt, I am ſold for a Captive to the Devil; my firſt Father ſold me for an Apple, Chriſt would now buy me back again to my ſelf; but, for my part, I am content that the firſt Bargain ſtand: As to my intereſt, I confirm the Bargain: As for my Soul being ſold to the Devil, to the Devil let it go. This is the voice of every wilful Refuſer of the Terms of the Goſpel. Oh Wretch! does not thy heart tremble? does not thy hair ſtand on end? do not thy knees ſhake? and are not the Joints of thy Loins loſed, to conſider, what thou haſt done, and art ſtill a doing?

Sinners, I have but little more to ſpeak to you; but ſhall that little be nothing? Hitherto you have ſtood it out, and will not be perſwaded, by ought that God hath ſpoken by me: But oh! muſt I leave you thus?

thus? Why may not a word at parting, do more than all that hath been ſpoken? Oh that it might! Shall neither my firſt, nor laſt words prevail with you? What if [my] laſt, ſhould be [your] laſt? If the laſt that I muſt preach, be the laſt that you muſt muſt hear? There is a day ſet, that will be your laſt day: There is a Sabbath, that will be your laſt Sabbath; There is a Sermon, that will be your laſt Sermon: There is a Warning, that will be your laſt warning: Oh what if this ſhould be it? If the Lord ſhould take your *this days deniall*, for your *final Anſwer*, and never ask your conſent again for ever? But whether it be your laſt, or no, I muſt be henceforth ſilent to you? And oh will you ſend me away with ſo ſad an Heart, with the ſorrow and ſhame of the diſappointed? Will you break my Heart, by perſiſting to harden yours? Is this all that I ſhall have, to return to the Lord, that ſent me unto you? I have declared thy Name unto them, but they did not regard it: I have invited them to come to thee, but they would not follow me: I have warned them to return from their ſins, but they would not hearken? Are you willing that I ſhall give in this Anſwer, and bear this Witneſs againſt you at the Great Day? Sinners hearken, Is there not one blind perſon among you, that is yet willing to have his Eyes open'd? Is there not one Captive to Luſt and Vanity, that's willing to be ſet free from his Bondage? Is there not one more that will be perſwaded to be wiſe, and to prefer an immortal Soul, God, Glory, Eternity, before his bruitiſh periſhing pleaſures? Is there not one Drunkard more, that will yet be perſwaded to be ſober? Not one vain perſon that will be perſwaded to be ſerious? Am I making my laſt Draught among

among you, and ſhall I take nothing? Not one Soul more? If you will not yet be prevailed with, then hear the Word of the Lord, *Ezek.* 3. 19. *If thou warn the Wicked, and he turn not from his wickedneſs, he ſhall die in his iniquity, but thou haſt delivered thy Soul.*

But if there be any few relenting Hearts among you, who are brought but thus far, to cry out, *Why what muſt I do?* I would leave with ſuch, theſe few words of counſel, and oh that my counſel might be accepted by them.

1. Get a deep ſenſe of thy dreadful ſtate: What art thou ſinner? What is thy ſtate? at eaſe? in peace? out of fear? in pleaſure? What, and yet a ſinner? in the Bond of Iniquity? Captive to the Devil? without Chriſt? without the Promiſe? under the Curſe? Study theſe Scriptures, *Joh.* 8 34. *He that committeth ſin, is the ſervant of ſinne.* ver. 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil.* 2 Tim. 2. 26. *Held Captive by him at his will.* Act. 8. 23. *in the gall of bitterneſs, and the bond of iniquity.* 1 Joh. 5. 19. *The World lyeth in wickedneſs.* Pſal. 11. 6. *Upon the Wicked he ſhall rain Snares, Fire, and Brimſtone, and an horrible Tempeſt, this ſhall be the portion of their Cry.* Pſal. 49. 15. *Like Sheep they are laid in the Grave, Death ſhall feed upon them.*

Riſe *Sampſon*, the *Philiſtims* are upon thee; awake ſleeper, the Devil is upon thee; Death is at thy back, the Grin is at thy heel, the Curſe is over thy head, thy very next ſtep may be Hell; Thou lyeſt in wickedneſs to day, and mayſt be in fire and brimſtone before to morrow: Sure thou art in a dead ſleep, that canſt take thine eaſe in ſuch a Lodging. Is this the ſtate thou art ſo loath to change? Is this the ſtate thou ſo boaſteſt of, and bleſſeſt thy ſelf in? When thine heart is merry with thy Wine, ſwell'd with thy

pride,

pride, jolly amongſt thy Companions; put in ſuch a ſerious Queſtion: *But what am I all this while?* Let this Thought, ſawce thy ſweet Morcel, ſpice thy pleaſant Cups, and be the Burthen of thy merry Songs: After this, Hell, Snares, Fire and Brimſtone, the Vengeance of Eternal Fire. Oh an Heaven, a Paradice, oh my dear pleaſures, oh my ſweet Daughter, oh my merry days, what Mortal can part with you? I but what comes after? What is there at the bottom? Look a little before thee, and if that ſight turn not thy ſtomach, ſure thou art ſufficiently hardy.

Study thy caſe, and tremble; and when thou trembleſt, there's hope thou wilt turn. Think not of Repentance, or eſcaping from thy ſinful ſtate, till thou ſee and fear it. We read, *Iſa.* 42.7. that Chriſt was ſent, *to open the blind eyes, and to bring out the priſoners out of Priſon.* If the priſoners eyes be ſhut, 'tis to little purpoſe, that the Priſon doors be open: Their Eyes muſt be firſt open'd, not onely that they may ſee their way [out,] but that they may ſee themſelves [in] Priſon. Open thine Eyes ſinner, if ever thou wilt eſcape; open thine Eyes, and ſee where thou art? Thy Fools Paradice, wherein thou bleſſeſt thy ſelf, is thy Souls Priſon, where thou art like to be held under Eternal Bondage.

2. Give a preſent Bill of Divorce to every ſinne; hug not Death one minute longer in thy Boſom: If thou loveſt thy Life, ſay not of any one ſinne, *Nothing but Death ſhall part thee and me:* No, nor ſo much as this, *Yet a little while, and I will let thee go. To day, to day if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts.*

3. Dread it as Hell, that thy hope in Chriſt, ſhould leſſen thy fear of ſin. Let not the hope of a Sa-

Saviour be thy damnation. Make not Christ the *Pandor of sin*; continue not in sin because Grace hath abounded.

4. Break off from thy Companions in sin; wilt thou love them to the death? Christ and thy Soul can never be married, till thy Soul and Sinners be parted. Escape for thy life, get thee up from the Tents of these men; linger not. Thou art held under the power of the Devil, by *cords*, and by *knotts*; by the cords of thy *sins*, and by the knots of thy *Companions*. There's no hope that the cords of sin will be broken, till the knots of evil Companions be loosed. Sinner, these *binding Cords* will, if thou look not to it, become *whip-cords* to torment thee. Oh take heed thou never come to be lashed with such knotted cords!

Note. this pag.

Thy Companions in sin, as they now heighten thy pleasures, so will they hereafter sharpen thy plagues. Sinners comfort their hearts with this thought, That if they be damned, they shall have store of company: but let them know, That the fire of Hell will burn just so much the cooler, for the multitudes that are there; as the fire of their Chimney does, for the store of fewell. When thou art charmed with the roaring of thy Companions in the Ale-house, think what musick their roaring with thee will make, when you shall all meet in your eternal Prison. Away from evil company; you will remember hereafter, when 'tis too late, how much, and with how little success, I have laboured with you in this thing.

5. Baffle not Conscience once more. Awakened Sinner, charm not thy Conscience into silence, nor dash it out of countenance. Thy Conscience is the

the only Friend that God or thy Soul hath left within thee. Thy will, and thy affections, and thine appetite, are all gone; the Devil hath ſtoln them away, and hired them all againſt thee, thou haſt nothing but poor Conſcience left.

Thy Conſcience hath been often upon thee; pleading with thee for God, and for pity to thy Soul: It hath warned thee, reproved thee, and often whiſper'd thee in thine Ear; What doſt thou mean? whither art thou going? when wilt thou return? Away with thy ſins, have done with thy Companions, no more of this drunkenneſs, this riot, this covetouſneſs; Thou art a loſt man, thy Soul is loſt, if thou go on. Thus Conſcience hath warned thee, and thou haſt ſometimes hearkned to it; and ſpoken it fair. The throbs, and the pangs, and the wounds thou haſt felt and received from it, have wrung from thee, now and then, a promiſe: Well, through the Grace of God, I'le hearken to Conſcience, I'le be a new man: Away from me ye Sinners, I will keep the Commandments of my God. And yet ſhortly after, when thy Temptations return, thy Companions come, all's forgotten; and along thou goeſt, as a fool to the Stocks, or an Ox to the ſlaughter; and this hath been thy way and thy manner, from time to time: Now and then Conſcience draws a ſigh, or a tear from thee; and by and by receives a kick or a ſtab.

Beware Sinner; Conſcience will not alwayes be thus us'd. If ever it ſpeak again, ſay it not Nay. Its next word may be its laſt; if ever thou wearieſt it into perpetual ſilence, then farewell all for ever. Conſcience is the only Friend thou haſt left.

Convinced

Convinced Soul! How wilt thou bear the revenges of an awakened abuſed Conſcience? all thy baffings of it here will be repeated over in eternity: How will all this look when it ſhall meet thee before thy Judge? Save thy ſelf from that hour: Baffle not Conſcience once more.

6. Let not the greatneſs of thy ſins, nor the difficulty of Chriſt's terms, hinder, or diſcourage thee, from making a preſent cloſe with Chriſt. Say not, his Yoke is too heavy his Croſs is too grievous for me to bear; or my ſins are too great for him to bear. Set the Throne againſt the Yoak, the Crown againſt the Croſs, infinite Merit and Mercy, againſt mighty ſins; and go unto Jeſus, caſt thy ſelf on his blood, and bowells, and put thy ſelf under his Yoke and Scepter. If he will give Life to thee, be content that he give Laws to thee: and as ever thou expecteſt to live by him, be reſolved to live to him, and no longer to thy ſelf. Go to Jeſus, and when thou goeſt, take with theſe two Scriptures, *Matth.* 11. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt; Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and you ſhall find reſt unto your Souls.* Joh. 6. 37. *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.*

7. Fall cloſe to Duties, and keep cloſe to Ordinances.

1. Let ſecret, and Family Prayer be thy *daily exerciſe.* Count not thy ſelf a Chriſtian, till thou give thy ſelf to prayer.

2. Let not reading the Word, Catechiſing, &c. be ſtrangers in thy houſe.

3. Prize, improve, and ſanctifie Sabbaths; The Lord on thoſe dayes comes down upon his Mount,

to

to meet thy Soul, to commune with thee, to bleſs thee, to feed thee, and fill thee with whatſoever thy Soul deſireth or wanteth. Get thee up to meet thy God: But remember when thou goeſt, leave thy ſtuff behind thee.

4. View often, and take an account of thy ſelf, of the in-come and ſucceſs of all thy Duties: What is all my praying, reading, hearing, &c. come to? What is brought forth? Is the work done for which all theſe are? Are my Sins and my Soul parted? Are my Companions in ſin abandoned? Is Chriſt and my Soul united? Beware you never make Praying, and Hearing, to ſerve you [inſtead] of Believing, and Repenting. But to help you on to it:

Remember theſe Seven Words when I am gone:

1. Get a deep Senſe of thy dreadful ſtate.
2. Abandon preſently every ſin.
3. Let not thy hope in Chriſt leſſen thy fear of ſin.
4. Shake off every ſinful Companion.
5. Baffle not Conſcience once more.
6. Make a preſent Cloſe with Chriſt.
7. Fall cloſe to Duties, and keep cloſe to Ordinances.

Theſe things do, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you: But remember, *There's no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.*

2. There are others that are *near the Kingdome of God. Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God.* There are ſome that are like *Ephraim*, Hoſea 7. 8. cakes half baked; like *Agrippa, almoſt Chriſtians*; *Acts* 26. 29. *Almoſt thou perſwadeſt me to be a Chriſtian*; ἐν ὀλίγῳ, Thou haſt brought me within a little

tle

tle of Christianity. They are come to the threshold of saving Faith; within a step of sincere godliness. They have been professing, and praying, and hoping, and wishing themselves in, and yet are short of it. They have been enlightened, in the knowledg of Christ; have tasted of the heavenly gift; have felt something of the sweetness of Christ; have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of many excellent and useful gifts; have tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the World to come. They have set out after Christ, have left the blind and prophane World, much behind them; have escaped much of the pollutions of this world; left many sins, taken up with many duties, have a name among the Saints, have suffered many things for the Name of Christ; and notwithstanding all this, here they stick, they cannot give up themselves fully to Christ; something or other, either the World, or their Companions, or their pleasures, or their ease, or their sloth, hath such hold on them, that they cannot, *unreservedly*, *resolvedly*, give themselves up to the dominion of Jesus Christ; nay, it may be, they cannot tell why, yet they cannot do it. Though they can say, I would be, yet they cannot say, I will be the Lord's. These are near the Kingdom of God, but yet short of it. He that cannot say, *I will be*, can less say, *I am the Lord's*.

But here I must distinguish of two sorts, of *almost Christians*.

1. There are some that have reached to *almost*, and are still reaching forwards; the state of such is hopeful, though it be not safe. Oh that we could see more such *almost Christians*!

2. There

2. There are others that have reached to, and *rest in almoſt*; who miſtaking *almoſt*, for *altogether*, do there take up their ſtand. Theſe are far from the Kingdom of God.

Brethren, I much fear, that among the number of Profeſſors, there are more of theſe *almoſt* Chriſtians, than we are aware of: Oh it would make our hearts ſhake to conſider, how far many go, to what degree, of reſignation, reſolution, affection, action, ſubmiſſion to ſufferings, they attain; and yet fall off at laſt, and thereby ſhew they were ſtill ſhort of Chriſt; *They went out from us, becauſe they were not of us.*

I particularly pity many of the more ſober Gentry, who have a good will to Religion, and a fair reſpect for the Profeſſors of it; countenancing holineſs, doing many worthy things for the Name and Servants of God; refraining from the vitiouſneſs, and vanity, of many of their Rank and Quality; who yet dwelling in Temptations, being entangled in carnal correſpondencies, entertained with an affluence of carnal delights and pleaſures; and finding hereby a ſtrict ſelf-denying and mortified life, to be of greater difficulty to them, than to men of lower rank, are apt to think it not of ſuch neceſſity; who may poſſibly upon a narrow enquiry diſcern, after all their good hopes of themſelves, and the great opinions of others concerning them, that they are yet ſhort of that ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, which alone will prove them Chriſtians indeed.

Bleſſed be God, there are amongſt us ſuch, thoſe who have broken through all temptations; have adventured upon the diſobliging all the World; have laid down their honours, pleaſures, friends, and all

 their

their carnall intereſts whatſoever, at the feet of Chriſt; and preferring a cloſe Communion with God, the peace of a good Conſcience, the joyes of Religion, yea the very reproach of Chriſt above all their worldly Honours, and fleſhly pleaſures, have given themſelves up to the power of the Goſpel, and an exemplary Spiritual and Heavenly life. But it is to be feared, leaſt there be alſo ſuch, who have deſervedly gain'd great reſpect among the Saints, and gone far along with them, who yet are come but to the threſhold of Chriſtianity; and being afraid to put in, there they are in danger to periſh everlaſtingly. *Quod fere fit non fit.* He that is, but almoſt ſaved, is damned for altogether.

Oh Friends, what do ye mean? will you looſe all the ground you have gotten, all the things you have wrought? ſhall all your ſufferings for the name of Chriſt be loſt, and in vain? after you have tafted the bitterneſs of the Croſs, will you not go one ſtep farther, and take the joys of the Croſs? Is the work of Regeneration brought to the Birth, and ſhall it at laſt miſcarry, and prove an abortion? would one ſtep more land your Souls in the Kingdom of God, are you gotten ſo near a ſhore, and will you periſh in the Harbour? are you gotten off from the Tents of the *Edomites*, and gotten even to the Borders of *Canaan*, and will you not enter? Are you gotten to *Piſgah* and have a view of the Land of Promiſe, and ſee that it is a good Land? are you come ſo near, as to ſee, that true holineſs is ſuch a beautiful State, ſuch a bleſſed State, and do you wiſh your ſelves in, and will you yet die on the other ſide *Jordan*? you have prayed, put on; a little more prayer may do it: you have laboured, and reaſoned with, and perſwaded

your

your hearts, give not over, a little more labour may prevail. Oh that I knew what to say more, that might bring you on. Oh that the Lord would yet put one word or other in my mouth, that might overcome you! that I might shoot one Arrow more, that might strike home, use one Argument more, that might be cogent, and gain your full consent to Christ; that I might see you safely landed ere I be parted from you. Oh think, think what a dreadful disappointment this will be for you, that are come so near to godliness, as that you verily think you have attained it; if after all the joy, pleasures and hopes, the little Religion you have had, hath fed you withall; you should at last have a TEKEL written for your doom; and hear that cutting word pronounced upon you. *Thou art weighed in the ballance, and art found wanting.* With you also would I leave a few words.

1. Loose not both Worlds, this World thou hast lost already, by leaving them so much behind thee; loose not that which is before, for want of coming on a little farther: think not of hanging always betwixt Heaven and Hell; In the other World there's no middle, either go back, or come on, turn thee to the right hand or to the left.

2. Mistake not *all most*, for *altogether*, such a mistake may be mortall. Do not too easily conclude, thou hast already attained; if thou takest something of Christianity to be all, thy all is nothing. 'Tis a wonderful thing, to see how easily men satisfie themselves in a matter of such weight and intricacy. Thine heart is deceitful, try it thoroughly before thou trust it. One grain too light, and thou art undone.

God, Glory, Soul, Eternity, all lye at ſtake; one tittle ſhort of ſincerity, and all loſt. Be jealous of thy ſelf, never give over ſuſpecting thy State, till thou haſt put it paſt ſuſpition: Conclude not, till thou haſt thoroughly diſputed the caſe, give not over the diſpute, till the matter be no longer diſputable. Canſt thou be too ſure? the leaſt miſtake is as wide as Heaven and Hell; the bottomleſs Gulf reaches home to the threſhold of glory; thy *tantum non*, will be as much as the Devil looks for, onely not in, though never ſo near, will be thy eternal perdition.

3. Beware that this thought, *one time or other, I ſhall have more power*, ſlacken not thy preſent care and labour. Let not thy hopes undo thee. Loſe not a preſent opportunity, in hopes of future ability. Labour each day, to bring the matter to a *preſent* Iſſue; and that with no leſſe earneſtneſs, than if this day were to give a finall determination; and thou were ſure, that thou wert juſt come, to thy *now or never*.

4. Let not a ſmall matter part Chriſt and thee, Heaven may not coſt thee half ſo much more, as it hath coſt thee already. Art thou come within one peny of thy Lords price, and ſhall that break the bargain?

5. Let not thy Oyl thou haſt gotten, ſerve onely for fewel for thy fire. Let not thy common grace thou haſt obtained here, be of no other uſe, but to add to thy confuſion hereafter: every beam of light that hath ſhined to thee here, will add to the horrour of thine everlaſting darkneſs. Every drop of Honey thou haſt taſted in Religion, will be thy Gall and Worm-wood, in the day of thy condemnation.

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Be not more miserable hereafter, for that thou hast been less wicked here; the remembrance how fair thou wert once for Glory, will be one of the sharpest Teeth of thine everlasting Worm.

6. Lastly, Be all or nothing; come up hither; or get thee Down to thy lot; particularly,

1. *Be all unto Christ.*
2. *Let Christ be all to thee.*
3. *Let all Christ be accepted, and improved by thee.*

1. Be all unto Christ; have none to please but Christ, and for Christ; have nothing to seek but Christ, and for Christ; resolve against *Reserves* and *limits*; give up all, and keep back nothing; say not, thus much I can spare, and no more; hitherto I will go, and no farther. Divide not thy self, thy love, thy care, thy aims betwixt Christ, and any thing else. Let thy whole Soul run in one Channel. Rest not short of a full resignation, and when thou hast resigned, repent not.

2. Let Christ be all to thee; say not, I must have an Estate too, my Friends too, my pleasures and my ease too; let Christ be enough, and all to thee; Father, Mother, House, Lands, Portion; say concerning all thou hast else, Be thou mine Lord, and let these go their way.

3. Let all of Christ be accepted and improved by thee. Divide not thy self, and divide not Christ; leave not any thing of thy self, for any but Christ, refuse not any thing of Christ, for thy self. Think not *thy all*, too much for thee to give, nor *Christ's all*, too much for thee to embrace. Thy half will not satisfie Christ, nor will half of Christ suffice thee. Thou must give and have, and therefore resolve

to give and take, all or none. Let all Christ be accepted, and improved by thee.

1. The merit of his blood:
2. The light and Authority of his Law.
3. The power of his Spirit.

1. Accept the merit of his blood; renounce thine own, and rely on his righteousness; as God hath, so do thou, lay on him all thy iniquities. Think not of *Sanctification* without *satisfaction*. Think not to satisfie in the least, by ought that thou canst do, let that lie upon him. Judge thy self, but seek to be justified alone through faith in his blood. Say unto the Lord, what I owe to thee, put it upon his account; my Christ must answer for me.

2. Accept, and submit to the light and authority of his Law. Think not, he is thy *Priest*, unless he be thy *Prophet*, and thy *King*: If he must answer for thee, let him instruct thee, and be thou willing to learn of him; since he hath bought thee, let him govern thee; say not of any thing he requires, *this is too much to do*, since he said not to thee, *'tis too much to die*. Count not thy self a Christian, whilest thou art unwilling to receive the utmost light, or to submit to the utmost of thy duty; say not of any one thing, of all that Christ requires, This I must have abated, and then I will be his.

3. Accept and exert the power of his Spirit, the Spirit of the Lord is a Spirit of Power. The same Argument which the Apostle uses to prove himself a Minister of Christ, is necessary to prove thee a Christian. 2 Cor. 13. 3, 4. *Since ye seek a proof*

of

of Chriſt ſpeaking in me, which to you ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. Though he was crucified through weakneſs, yet he liveth by the power of God; for we alſo are weak in him, but we ſhall live with him by the power of God. (Ye ſeek a proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in me,) ye put me to prove that I am a Miniſter of Chriſt; why, here's the proof of it, My preaching hath not been weak, but mighty in you; It hath been followed and atteſted, by the power of Chriſt, which hath wrought mightily in you; as weak as we are, yet the power of Chriſt hath been manifeſted and magnified in us. Doeſt thou ſeek a proof of thy Chriſtianity? why, here muſt be the proof, that though thou art weak of thy ſelf, yet thou liveſt in the power of God, which is mighty in thee. Though thou canſt do nothing of thy ſelf, yet thou art *able to do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengthens thee.*

Thou ſayſt thou art *willing*, but thou art *weak*; thou deſireſt to be, and to do, what God would have thee, but thou canſt not perform.

This may comfort and ſupport thee much, under thy failings and miſcarriages in ſome particular duties; but if this be thy caſe *in ordinary*, in the main of thy life; that *to will is all thou haſt*, thou art not a Chriſtian. *He that hath not the Spirit of Chriſt, is none of his.* And he that hath the Spirit of Chriſt, it is in him as the living power of God, actually carrying him on in an holy life. Ezek. 36. 27. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes; and ye ſhall keep my judgments, and do them.*

I will not onely command, perſwade, incline you, but [cauſe] you. It ſhall be done, my Spirit ſhall bring you on, and help you through. Ye [*ſhall*] keep my *Statutes*, and do them. Where ever the Spirit of God hath breathed in *the life of Grace*, there are more than breathings out after *a gracious life*. Sincere grace hath more in it, than *wiſhings and wouldings*, than *Attempts* and *Overtures*; Life is a power to act. *Phil.* 2. 12, 13. *Work out your own Salvation, for it is God that worketh in you, to will and to do.* Where ever God worketh the τὸ *velle*, he works alſo the τὸ *operari*. Where ever God works [*in*] he gives us a power to work [*out*] the Works of Chriſtianity. Oh reſt not, till thou find thy ſelf indued with this power from on high, and inabled to go through with thy work: They are not thy *Attempts*, but thy *Atchievments*: They are not thy *Offers* at an *Holy Life*, but thy acting it, that muſt prove thee a Chriſtian; *He that doth Righteouſneſs, is Righteous.*

Be it thus with thee; be all to Chriſt, let Chriſt be all to thee; let all Chriſt be accepted and improved by thee; heartily accept the merit of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, ſubmit to the Light and Authority of his Law; get thy ſelf poſſeſt with, and live in the power of his Spirit: Be it thus with thee, come up hither, and then thou art ſafe: Thy *almoſt* is now come to *altogether*; and if I muſt now leave thee, thou wilt be the better able to ſpare me: *Theſe things do, and the God of Peace ſhall be with thee.* Thou art gotten into Sanctuary; and now whatever Toſſings and Tumblings, whatſoever unpleaſing or afflicting Changes may be thy Lot in this World, thou may'ſt ſing that *Requiem* to thy ſelf, *Return unto thy reſt, O my*

Soul

Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee: Go thy way, eat thy Bread with joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thee.

Though thou walkeſt through the ſhadow of Death, thou may'ſt now ſit thee down under the ſhadow of thy Lord, with great delight, and with great ſecurity, whoſe Fruit ſhall be ever ſweet to thy Taſt: Though thou dwelleſt in *Meſech*, and haſt thy Habitation among the Tents of *Kedar*, yet thou may'ſt lay thee down in peace, and take thy reſt, for the Lord doth, the Lord will make thee to dwell in ſafety.

2. To the Godly.

Happy Souls, *The God of Peace is with you, all things ſhall work for good to you*; onely that he may continue with you, continue you with him, in the obedience of that Goſpel, to which you have deliver'd up your ſelves.

My *Exhortation* to you ſhall be.

1. General; Reſpecting the whole courſe of your Lives.

2. Particular; Reſpecting your daily Walk.

My general *Exhortation* ſhall be bottom'd on that of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 1. 27, 28. *Let your Converſation be, as it becometh the Goſpell of Chriſt; that whether I come and ſee you, or elſe be abſent, I may hear of your Affairs, that you ſtand faſt in one Spirit, with one Mind, ſtriving together for the Faith of the Goſpel. In nothing terrified by your Adverſaries, which is to them an evident token of Perdition, but to you of Salvation, and that of God.*

[*Let*

[*Let your Converſation be as it becometh the Goſpel*] Walk worthy of the Goſpel; let your lives be ſuitable, and anſwerable to the Holy Goſpel which you profeſs.

1. Let your lives anſwer *the ends* of the Goſpel, the exaltation of the Name, and glorious Grace of God in Chriſt; live an humble, ſelf-denying, ſelf-abaſing; this is a Chriſt exalting life.

2. Let your Lives anſwer *the Dignities*, and Honours the Goſpel inveſts you with; You are the children of God, the Heirs of Glory, the Spouſe of Chriſt, the Bride, the Lambs Wife: You are a Royall Prieſthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar people; know your priviledges, and do not live below your ſelves; defile not your glory, by ſtooping to a Carnal and Earthly Life: a Jewel is not more unbecoming a Swines ſnout, than fleſhly Husks a Saints Palate: 'Tis below you, who are a peculiar people to your God, to live in common with the men of this World: humble your ſelves, into the leaſt of Saints, but do not humble your ſelves into Bruits: Live in the Spirit, converſe with God, be dealing for Glory, Honour, and Immortality.

3. Let your Lives anſwer *the Names*, which the Goſpel puts upon you; *Doves, Lambs, Lillies*; be harmleſs, peaceable, gentle, beautiful, fragrant, ſending forth a precious ſavour in the World.

4. Let your Lives anſwer *the Riches*, the Reward, the Crown, the Kingdom, which the Goſpel ſets before you.

Live a *contented life*, be ſatisfied, be well pleaſed, with what you have here, be it little or much; diſgrace not your portion, the Goſpel allots you, as if it were

were a poor inſufficient portion: Let your Souls ſay, *How ſmall an handful ſoever you have of this Earth, it is enough, Chriſt is mine:* A diſcontented Chriſtian ſays, *Chriſt is not enough, Heaven is not enough:* Let the *Contentation* of thy *Spirit*, declare before the World, that *the Lines are fallen to thee in a pleaſant place, and that thou haſt a goodly Heritage:* Do not put this Scorn upon God, and Glory, that thou muſt be beholding to the Devil, to mend thy portion.

Chriſtian, Either thou art within the Promiſe, or a ſtranger from it: Either thou haſt the *God of Peace* with thee, or not: If not, me thinks thou ſhould'ſt find other matter to take up thy Thoughts, and not have leiſure to perplex thy ſelf with every trivial want; that thy meat, or thy drink, or thine houſe, or the carriage of thy Friends towards thee, are not according to thy mind; thy Soul, thy Soul man, thy life is in danger. Oh what an Eternity art thou like to have of it? Canſt thou want a God, a Chriſt, an Heaven, and thine Heart never ſtir at it? And is the diſſatisfaction of thy vain mind or appetite ſuch a Burthen? Is the Devil in thine heart, and it never moves thee? and ſhall an ill Neighbour be a vexation to thee? Canſt thou feel a Feather, when thou haſt a Talent upon thee? The Curſe, the Curſe of God is upon thee: I cannot wonder [*than*] ſhould'ſt be diſcontent; but me thinks theſe ſmall matters, by a man in thy caſe, ſhould not be minded.

If Chriſt and the Promiſe be thine, is not that enough? Are not all things enough? God is all things: He that hath the Son, hath not onely, with him, but in him, all things: Are all things nothing with thee?

What

What would'ſt thou have more than all? The *Heathens* acknowledged, *That Vertue is ſufficient.* It was a *Maxime*, among the Antient Philoſophe s, αὐτάρκης ἡ ἀρετή, *Vertue is ſelf-ſufficient:* A vertuous man hath no need to be beholding either to Friends or Fortune: He hath enough in himſelf. The Apoſtle tells us, That *Godlineſs*, μετ' αὐταρκείας, with its *ſelf ſufficiency, is great Gain*, 1 *Tim.* 6.6. *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* 14. 14. *A good man is ſatisfied from himſelf.* He hath that within him, out of which his ſatisfaction grows. A Chriſtian hath the whole Goſpel within him, He hath Chriſt, the Promiſe, the Everlaſting God; Heaven, Glory, within him: As rich as he is, he may truly ſay, *Omnia mea mecum porto.* He carries his [*All*] in his Heart, and can thence get out a Living, a Sufficiency, for all Times, Caſes, and Wants: Caſt him out naked, out of his Habitation, out of his Countrey, yet he carries all with him, he leaves not an Hoof behind him.

Chriſtians, leave it to the Poor of the Earth, to carnal men, (the richeſt of them is poor enough) leave it to them to be diſcontent: A carnal man hath ſo many to be beholding to, to patch up his contentment, that 'tis no wonder he falls ſhort of it; the Sun, the Clouds, his Fields, his Folds, his Friends, his Enemies, his Honours, his pleaſures, his meat, his drink, his houſe, his mony, yea the Devil & all, & his Luſts, every Creature muſt come in with their part, to contribute to his contentment: if but one thing fails him, there's ſomething wanting to make it up: Nay, if none fail, but they all do their beſt to pleaſe him, yet all will not do, *in the fulneſs of his ſufficiency he is in ſtraits.* When he hath all he can have, his ſtill hungring

gring Heart cries out of what it hath, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity.* Leave it to theſe, Chriſtians, who have nothing but emptineſs to fill their Souls with: leave it to them to be diſcontented. Will you lay the ſame imputation upon the God of Glory? The Diſcontent of a Chriſtian, is a kind of Blaſphemy: it proclaims concerning God alſo, and all the Glory of the Goſpel: This alſo is Vanity; *Vanity of Vanities, all is vanity.*

Chriſtians, ſtudy your Riches more, count over your Treaſures; dwell more in your God, and his Goſpel: Read over your Privileges, Promiſes, and Hopes; feed more on that Bread of Life, drink more freely of thoſe Living Springs, which are broken forth to you: Prove more what Godlineſs hath in it: Get out the ſweetneſs and the pleaſure of it, (none in the World live ſuch a voluptuous Life, as he that lives moſt with God) get out the pleaſure of Godlineſs, lie more at the Breaſts, ſuck harder; preſs the Cluſters and the Wine, and Milk will come; make the moſt of Religion, and you will have enough; never blame it for empty, or unſatisfactory, while there is more to be had.

Gad not into other Paſtures, run not from Flower to Flower, keep you Home: Let not your God find you in another Field: If you keep with God, the leſs you have of Creature-vanities, the more full will your Contentment be. Chriſtian, Honour thy God, and his Goſpel, let his Breaſts ſatisfie thee, and erre thou always in his Love. Let the World read the Goſpel-ſufficiency in thy Souls pleaſure, and ſatisfaction with it alone.

5. Let

5. Let your Converſations anſwer the *ſupports* of the Goſpel, and its ſuccours. Live a *patient life*; Jam. 5. 7. *Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.* Patience is a Grace ſuited to our preſent Goſpel ſtate. I may call it, a *Friend that's born for the day of adverſity.* If you are *Chriſtians*, you have need of *Patience*; and if you have *Patience*, you need no more. *Jam.* 1. 4. *Let Patience have her perfect work, that you may be entire, lacking nothing.*

Patience, is a ſubmitting, ſedate, and calm frame of ſpirit, whereby a Chriſtian, from Goſpel grounds, is born up under all his Troubles, and born through all his Duties.

Betwixt *Patience* and *Contentedneſs*, there is this difference; *Contentedneſs* is the quiet of the heart, and its ſatisfaction with its *ſmalleſt portion of good things*. *Patience* is the quiet of the heart under the *greateſt preſſure of evill things*.

A *patient ſpirit* is a *ſubmitting ſpirit*; It's heartily content that God ſhould have his Will. With whatſoever God is pleaſed, it will not be diſpleaſed. *It's the Lord, let him do whatſoever ſeems good in his Eyes.* What ſeems good in God's eyes, ſhall not ſeem evil in mine.

It is *a Calm and quiet ſpirit*: It will not ſtrive nor cry, nor lift up its voice in the ſtreet; it can *mourn*, but it does not *murmur*; it can *feel*, but it will not *fret* at the hand of God. A patient perſon is ever *compos mentis*; has the command and government of his ſpirit; keeps it ſober, and in due order; doth not rave, and rage. Impatience is a kind of frenzy; ſuch perſons are *beſides themſelves*. In our patience we poſſeſs, and by our impatience we loſe our Souls: we loſe the rule and government of them, the peace

and

and the uſe of them. An impatient man is beſides himſelf, both as a Man and as a Chriſtian.

1. He is beſides himſelf *as a Man*: Impatience turns Reaſon out of doors; and for the Affections, they are all in an uproar, and will know no command of government.

2. He is beſides himſelf *as a Chriſtian*; turned quite out of courſe: Duties, Comforts, Experiences, Hopes, all are laid aſide. Keep you quiet, keep the peace in your heart, and you keep your heart.

In this calmneſs and quietneſs, *it bears up under troubles.* Patience hath Fortitude in it, it neither frets, nor faints, under all its burthens. Chriſtians [muſt] bear, and patient Chriſtians [can] bear any thing that comes on them. The proper exerciſe of patience, is *enduring*: he endures not that ſuffers only, but that can bear what he ſuffers.

It *bears through its Duties*: The paſſion of a patient perſon doth not hinder his action. He holds his courſe, keeps on his way, whatever load he hath in his back. He (runs) with patience, the race which is ſet before him; he is not diſcouraged nor diverted from his holy courſe by any ſuffering it coſts him.

And indeed, Chriſtian Patience ſtands not in a bare forced quiet, in a biting in, or keeping down, our fretting ſituations, from venting themſelves in word or carriage, or in a ſullen ſilence or ſtupidity; but in the maintaining ſuch a tranquillity of ſpirit, under all we ſuffer, as that we can ſtill, both enjoy and ſerve the Lord. He is a patient Chriſtian, that is as much a Chriſtian in a ſtorm, as in a calm; that can pray, believe, love, bleſs God, follow God, and keep his way, when he ſmites, as when he ſmiles.

Laſtly,

Lastly, in all this, a Christian is upheld and carried on, *from Gospel grounds.* 'Tis not a naturall hardiness or apathy, 'tis not the spirit of a man that does sustain his infirmities; 'tis upon the everlasting Gospel that he stands.

There are three Things especially, that bear him through. His viewing,

The Hand of the Lord.
The End of the Lord.
The Help of the Lord.

1. He sees *the Hand of the Lord* in all that befalls him: Whence was *Davids* patience? *Psal.* 39. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou Lord didst it.* Whence was *Elie's* patience? 1 *Sam.* 3. *It is the Lord, let him do what seems him good.* Whence was *Job's* patience? *Job* 1. 21. *The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* By the way Note, That a godly man is not only patient under his afflictions, but thankful. He is not only thankful for Mercies, but for Chastisements. 'Tis not only, *the Lord hath given,* blessed be his Name; the Lord hath built me up, the Lord hath filled me, the Lord hath hedged me, blessed be his Name: but also, *the Lord hath taken away,* the Lord hath humbled me, broken me, undone me, left me naked, left me nothing, blessed be the Name of the Lord. This by the way.

2. He sees *the End of the Lord*; that God intends his good by all that comes upon him. He knowes that all things, and therefore this which is upon him, whatever it be, shall work to him for good.

3. He

3. He feels *the Help of the Lord.* When the hand of the Lord is upon him, he feels alſo the hand of the Lord under him: *underneath the everlaſting arms,* Deut. 32. 27.

The Goſpel, as it hath allotted him many Tribulations, ſo it hath allowed him mighty Supports. *A mighty God,* who is the rock of *ages, Iſa.* 26. *a merciful high Prieſt,* who being tempted himſelf, is able alſo to ſuccour thoſe that are tempted, *Heb.* 2. 18. *pretious Promiſes,* 2 Pet. 1. *gracious experiences,* Rom. 5. 4. *patience worketh experience.* This laſt ſupport, [experience] hath all the reſt in it. Experience is the whole Goſpel proved. A patient, experienced Chriſtian, hath proved all things, what they are; hath proved the World, and what it is, and the worſt it can do: hath proved the Word, and what there is in it: hath proved what God is, what Chriſt is, what grace, and peace, and a good Conſcience are: Tribulation often takes away God, and his Goſpel; and we never ſo well prove what God is, as when we have him *alone*; what grace is, what a good Conſcience is, as when we have nothing elſe left us. Our Religion never ſhews ſo much what is in it, as when it's moſt put to it. When the Adverſary hath gotten the greateſt advantage of us; of the Sun, of the Wind, of the Ground; when he preſſeth with moſt violence, with moſt fury upon us, then we beſt know, what the weapons of our Warfare are. The comforts and ſupports of Religion are not known, either of what ſtrength, or of what ſweetneſs they are, till they are thus proved. *Hezekiah* had never ſuch a taſte of his integrity, as when he received the Meſſage of death. *Stephen* had never ſuch a ſight of Heaven, as through a ſtorm of ſtones. Chriſt is never ſo

ſweet as in a Priſon. When God meets his Saints in a Wilderneſs, then he ſpeaks comfortably to them. A patient Chriſtian hath more or leſs experience of all this; and hence is he ſupported, keps quiet under all his ſufferings, and carried with courage on his way.

Be patient therefore Brethren unto the coming of the Lord. You have need of patience, and no excuſe for your impatience. The ſufferings of the Goſpel call for patience; and the ſupports of the Goſpel will condemn your impatience. If you will be godly, count upon it that you have a great fight of afflictions to endure. Venture not into the fight without your armour: An impatient Creature is a naked Souldier; How eaſily will Sathan deſtroy, whom he hath once diſarmed. The more you [can] the leſs you [ſhall] ſuffer. Secure your ſpirit, and you ſave your ſelf from harm. There's no Dart ſhall hurt you, that does not hit your heart. Keep your heart whole, and the Devil loſes all his ſhot. Be patient, and you poſſeſs your Souls; keep your Souls, and the Enemy loſes the day.

Chriſtians, 'tis of great conſequence to you, to be of a patient ſpirit, and 'tis a great Duty; there's much more in it, than every eye obſerves.

When I perſwade you to *Patience*; know, That 'tis no ſmal thing that I am perſwading you to: 'Tis no leſs than,

1. To the whole of Chriſtianity.
2. To the height of Chriſtianity.

1. To the *whole of Chriſtianity*: To be truly Patient, hath as much in it, as to be a Chriſtian: To be

be holy, humble, meek, mortified, ſelf-denying, crucified to the World, heavenly minded; all this you muſt be, or you cannot be patient. Patient and proud? patient and peeviſh? patient and unmortified, earthly-minded, a ſelf-ſeeker? This is as great a contradiction, as to be proud and humble, fleſhly and ſpiritual, earthly and heavenly, a Chriſtian and no Chriſtian. If ever you will be poſſeſſours of this grace, you muſt be partakers of all grace. Get a believing, broken, ſelf-denying heart; get your ſpirits furniſhed with the love of Chriſt, the hope of the Goſpel, the contempt of the World; live above in the other World: Let Chriſt, Glory, Honour, Immortality, be the portion of your Souls, and the pleaſure of your lives, if ever you would be truly patient.

2. To *Chriſtianity in the height of it.* In preſſing you to *Patience*, I am herein preſſing you to get *Aſſurance*. Without aſſurance though patience be poſſible, yet you'l find it both difficult, and very imperfect.

What Patience, when I queſtion whether my ſins be forgiven? whether God be reconciled, and be not dealing with me as an enemy? What Patience, when I doubt, whether my afflictions be not the penſion of a baſtard, rather than the portion of a ſon? when I am not ſure, but my preſent ſufferings are ſent to carry me down to eternal ſufferings? I am in miſery and perpetual torments: never a day without its evils; I can ſee no end of it, nor it may be never ſhall; this or worſe may laſt for ever. Oh if I were ſure it would be well at laſt, I could be quiet; but for ought I know, the Furnace I am in,

may be the very mouth of Hell: The diſeaſes, the wounds I am under, may be ſent to let out my Soul into everl ſting burnings; how can I be patient under ſuch doubts and fears? Make God ſure, *Chriſtian*, make Heaven ſure once, and then thou may'ſt ſet thine Heart at reſt; then thou may'ſt almoſt as eaſily exerciſe, as thine Enemies find thee Exerciſe of, thy patience.

Chriſtians, if you will be patient, you muſt be painful: give diligence; be diligent in making your Calling and Election ſure: be diligent in duty, be vigilant againſt iniquity: If you will be patient, be impatient of ſin, and you will be patient of ſorrow; make ſin ſure; get it ſlain by the croſs, and buried in the grave of your Lord, ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch: have nothing to conflict with, in the day of your affliction, but your affliction: beware of carrying guilt with you up upon the Croſs; Let not the gall of guilt be mingled with the vinegar of affliction: A mortified ſpirit will deaden all our pain, and a pure Conscience will bear all our burthens.

Till this be done, I muſt tell you, you will find ſuffering to be hard ſervice. 'Tis an eaſie matter to talk of the ſufferings of the Goſpel, and to boaſt great things afore-hand; as you know who did once, and what came of it; *Though I die with thee, I will never deny thee.* But when it comes to the pinch, when Troubles come upon us, when the hand of the Lord touches us, and touches where it's moſt tender; brings thoſe calamities on us, which are moſt contrary to us, ſtrips us of thoſe comforts which are moſt dear to us, takes away all from us, and leaves

us

us naked; when we feel the *ſmart* of the rod, when every ſtroke fetches blood; when the feet are hurt in the Stocks, and the Iron enters into the Soul; when the vinegar and the gall comes, when the thorns and the nails of the Croſs are ſtruck in; when ſhame and reproach, when ſcorn and contempt, when hunger and thirſt, when cold and nakedneſs, when bodily torment and pain, are all meaſured to you for your portion, and mingled in your cup: If ever God ſhould call you out, to take your part with that Cloud of Witneſſes, *Heb.* 11. who were tortured, had trialls of cruell mockings and ſcourgings, of bonds and impriſonment; who were ſtoned, were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the Sword; wandring about in Sheep-skins, and Goat-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted and tormented; wandring in deſerts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth: If ever this ſhould be your caſe, then you will know how much there is in Chriſtian Patience; and how neceſſary ſelf-denyall, mortification, living in the faith, and fellowſhip of God, and the power of his ſpirit, and aſſurance of his love, are to your patient poſſeſſing of your Souls.

Believe it, *Chriſtians*, the Goſpel hath not furniſhed us with ſuch large proviſion of Graces, Comforts, Promiſes, Hopes, for nothing; you will find need enough of them all. Such amazing aſtoniſhing trialls you may be called out to, as nothing leſs, than the richeſt ſtock of Promiſes, the greateſt treaſure of Experiences, the higheſt pitch of ſpiritual Graces, your greateſt conqueſt over Luſt and the World, your living under the fulleſt influences of Divine

Power, and the cleareſt Senſe of Divine Love, will furniſh you with an enduring ſpirit; nothing leſs will, but this will do it. Get Sin, and the World under, make God ſure, make the Promiſes ſure; live in a daily conflict with Sin, contempt of the World, and exerciſe of all Graces; Live in the obedience, viſion, and fruition of your God, and then you are ready for the Enemy. Let your Sufferings be what they will, come when they will, your Souls are at Anchor, and ſhall have a continual Calm within, how Tempeſtuous ſoever the Weather be.

As a farther Encouragement, and Help to this great Duty, conſider, that your patient ſuffering will be,

1. Your witneſs to the Goſpel.
2. Gods witneſs to your Adoption.
3. The cure of your Corruption.
4. Your triumph over Temptation.
5. The improvement of your Sanctification.
6. The advance of your Glory.

1. Your patient ſuffering will be *your witneſſe to the Goſpel.* Who were that cloud of Witneſſes, mentioned *Heb.* 12. 1. but the ſuffering Saints; that Army of Martyrs recorded *Chap.* 11. whoſe patience is ſet forth as a Pattern to thoſe that ſhould come after: Theſe are the Witneſſes.

What was it by which they bare Witneſs, but by their patient ſuffering?

To what did they bear Witneſs, but to God and his Goſpel?

What

What Witneſs did they bear? Why, *That the Goſpel is true:* The ſufferings of the Saints, are their Seal to the Goſpel: As he that believeth, ſo much more, he that ſuffereth in Faith, hath ſet to his Seal that God is true. In the Faith and patience of the Saints, may be ſeen (as the Seal in the Wax) the prints and impreſſions of the Truth, and Faithfulneſs of God. God hath ſaid, He will uphold, he will not forſake them: and their patience ſhews, he doth uphold, he hath not forſaken them. 2. *That the Goſpel is a Glorious Goſpel:* That God is a good Maſter, that it's good being with Chriſt any where; That they are no Loſers by their Religion, but that it's Wages are above it's Work, and its pay above its pain.

It were not poſſible, when they prove how much the Goſpel coſts them, but they ſhould be weary of it, and repent of their Faith, and renounce their profeſſion, if they did not find the Lord a good pay-maſter.

The Apoſtle tells us, 2 *Cor.*3.3. that Chriſtians are *the Epiſtles of Chriſt*, or his *Letters* of Commendation to the World, in whom may be read his Excellencies and Glory, and the incomparable advantages of his Service. And as all Chriſtians, ſo eſpecially ſuffering Chriſtians: The Character of Chriſt is never ſo viſible and legible, as when 'tis written in Bloud. The Bowels, and Bounty, and Kindneſs of God our Saviour, never appear'd in more Glory, than upon [his] Croſs; and there's no ſuch lively Tranſcript of them, as upon [our] Croſs. On his Croſs, his Bloud; on our Croſs, his Spirit, and the precious grace and comforts of it, are moſt plentifully ſhed forth, 1 *Pet.*4.14. *If ye be reproached*, that is, and

endure it, *the Spirit of Glory, and of God, resteth upon you.* The Spirit and influences of a Crucified Jesus, do never shine forth to such advantage, as in his Crucified Saints. Upon the patience of a Saint, under the sufferings of Christ, he that runs may read, this written, *I serve a good Master.* Our patient suffering is our witness to Christ and his Gospel.

Christian, when God sends thee to *Calvary*, he sends thee thither as a *chosen vessel*, that thou should'st there bear his Name before the World. Art thou impatient at this? What canst thou not bear this honour thy God hath laid upon thee? Hath God chosen thee, thee amongst all thy *Brethren*, to do him this honour, and wilt thou be angry, that he did not rather choose some other? 'Twas an unworthy Answer, of a good Man, *Moses*, when God sent him to *Egypt*, to appear for him before *Pharaoh*, and to be the *Deliverer* of his *People*, Exod. 4. 13. *Send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.* Send whom thou wilt, any body but me. By our sinful shifting our selves of Trouble, or our Murmurings under them, we say the like; Send whom thou wilt to witness for thee, but let me go free: Let me have my ease, and my quiet, and my Liberty, and take this honour, who will for me. Unworthy Spirits! Oh me thinks, Christians, we should rather step one before another; and when our Lord demands, *Who will go with me? Who will bear my Cross?* Me thinks we should readily answer; *I will go, let me bear it Lord*; and not grudge as we do, that he puts us to it.

Our Impatience *bears false witness* against God, and his Gospel; what's the voice or the meaning of Impatience, less than this?

What-

Whatever is ſaid in honour of the Goſpel, what a bleſſedneſs, what an ineffable advantage 'tis, to all that heartily own it; yet having prov'd it, I find it even as much as nothing, by that all the coſts and charges of it are caſt up: The Comforts of it will never ballance them; ſet one againſt any other, the bad againſt the good, the bitter againſt the ſweet: Set one againſt another, and I have made but a bad Bargain, by becoming a Chriſtian. This is the Voice of Impatience. Chriſtian, Thou paſſeſt over thy Murmuring, as a light Evil; as if thy pain might excuſe thy pettiſhneſs: As if it were, becauſe 'tis ſo common, a very ſmall thing: But is it nothing to bely God, to bear falſe Witneſs againſt his Goſpel? Thy Repining at the Sufferings of Chriſt, is next to Repenting that ever thou wert a Chriſtian.

Brethren, Let us do the Lord this Right, by the patience of our Spirits, to confeſs before the World, *That all the ſufferings of this Life, are not worthy to be compared to the Glory that ſhall be reveal-ed*; And *looking unto Jeſus, the Author and Fi-niſher of our Faith*; *Let us learn of him, for the Joy that is ſet before us, to indure the Croſs, and deſpiſe the Shame*: That we may ſit down at his, as he is ſet down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God.

Secondly, Your patient ſuffering, will be *God's Witneſs to your Adoption*, Heb. 12. 7. *If ye en-dure chaſtening, God dealeth with you as with Sons.*: The LORD doth not uſe to deal ſo with ſtrangers.

Afflictions

Afflictions are Gods *Family Diſcipline*. Yet mark, 'tis not, if the ſuffering alone will not prove our Son-ſhip, (the Rod is for the fools back, as well as the childs;) but patient ſuffering will, for

1. Patient ſuffering is it ſelf, an evidence of our adoption: it is the mark of the Lord Jeſus upon us. If thou haſt both the ſame lot, and the ſame ſpirit, that was upon Chriſt, there's thy Lords mark upon thee, whereby he marks thee out for one of his own. Men had need of other marks to prove them Chriſtians, than what the Rod hath made on their backs; 'tis our quiet ſubmitting to it, and that upon Goſpel grounds, as hath been before ſhewed, that muſt do it, and this will be evidence enough. None but a Son will thus ſubmit.

2. The ſuffering ſtate of Chriſtians, is ordinarily attended with other evidences. Sufferings will ſet patience on work, and patience will ſet every other grace on work. Whatſoever it be, that findes work for patience, will therein find work for faith, and love, and hope, and ſelf-denyal. Chriſtians never appear ſo much believers, ſo humble, ſo mortified, as under the Croſs. If there be any faith, or love, or hope in the heart, 'twill appear in the day of adverſity. If there be any fire under the aſhes, throw on water, and then you ſhall hear it, when, it may be before, you could ſee none there. As *Solomon* ſayes, *folly*, ſo we may ſay, *wiſdom*, grace is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will fetch it out. We ſeldom know, either how bad, or how good our hearts are, till they are thus proved; *This I did to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart.*

Beſides,

Beſides, this is the ſeaſon, when ordinarily there are moſt plentiful illapſes, and incoms from above. God ſeldom ſends ſuch Tokens of his love, as to his Children in priſon. The light of his Countenance he often reſerves for their darkeſt eſtate, he ſets to his Seal, when the Wax is on fire. There have been Chriſtians, that would never believe that they were ſuch, till God hath told it them at the ſtake; the higheſt joyes, the fulleſt ſence of everlaſting kindneſs, have been moſt ordinarily the portion of Gods Martyrs. When Hell is let looſe upon them, then Heaven is moſt open. Many Chriſtians have met with ſuch refreſhings in their bonds, that their enlargement hath been their Priſon.

If this be ſo Chriſtians, who would fear ſufferings? who would not be patient? would it comfort you, to know that God is your Father? Be patient, and you ſhall know it. What would you not bear, ſo you might be ſure you are the Lords? It may be you have been held under doubt and fears, and ſad uncertainties, hitherto all your dayes; you have gone about from *duty* to *duty*, from *Ordinance* to *Ordinance*, from *Chriſtian* to *Chriſtian*, enquiring, and mourning, and complaining, and crying out. Oh if I were ſure that Chriſt were mine; that my faith, and my love, and my hope, and my obedience were ſound, and ſincere, ſuch as would prove my adoption, then I could be quiet: Why, if ever GOD calls thee to Sufferings, follow him chearfully: He calls thee out, to prove to thee, that thou lov'ſt him: Fear not to go up with him on the Croſs, Aſſurance is a Fruit, that moſt ordinarily grows on that Tree.

Let

Let hypocrites only fear ſufferings, 'twill be ſad indeed to them; there's many a ſelf-deceiving Profeſſor, that never ſuſpected himſelf to be an hypocrite, till perſecution made him an Apoſtate: that's a woful caſe, to have Sufferings come upon him for the Goſpel's ſake, only to tell him, That he hath no part in Chriſt nor his Goſpel. Let hypocrites be afraid and unquiet, but let Saints be patient. The ſame trialls which will prove them baſtards, will prove you ſons.

3. Your patient ſuffering is *the cure of your Corruption.* Sufferings are our medicine for corruption, and patience our cure: To what degree of patience a Chriſtian hath attain'd; that degree of power hath he gotten over iniquity. Till luſt be conquered, there's no patience: If there be but one unmortified corruption remaining, and an affliction comes and grates upon that, this will provoke; there's no bearing it. Whence is impatience, but from this, for the moſt part, that we cannot bear any violence that's offered to luſt? What is Patience, but this, that we can bear that pain, that Luſt, when pinch'd, will put us to? quietly to ſuffer, our pride, our envy, our paſſion, our ſenſual appetites, to be cut ſhort of what would gratifie them; and freely to leave them under that which comes to kill and crucifie them; to be able to want that fuell that feeds, and endure that water that doth quench theſe fires; This is Patience. When our Pride is ſtrip'd of its ornaments, our appetites depriv'd of their delicates, our covetouſneſs of its ſubſtance, our fleſh of its eaſe; and we either feel no ſmart, or can bear the

ſmart

ſmart of it, then we are Patient. And when we can thus leave our *Corruptions*, to whatever ſufferings come upon them, without taking part with them in their ſufferings; then luſt is conquered. Luſt no longer lives nor maintains its power and intereſt in us, than whileſt, in all its afflictions, we are afflicted; when we feel its ſufferings as our ſufferings, its diſappointments and diſſatisfactions as our own, and fly out againſt whatſoever falls upon it, as if it fell upon our Souls. When we can ſay, 'tis my paſſion that ſuffers, but not I; 'tis my Covetouſneſs that ſuffers, my Pride that ſuffers, but not I; and let them ſuffer (for me), let them be pinch'd, and pain'd, and ſtarved, and die; none of all this ſhall move me: nay, herein I do and I will rejoyce: There's patience. Patience is Luſt conquered.

Chriſtians, you complain of Corruption, you tell one another ſad ſtories, what a Burden, what a bondage 'tis you are under, whileſt Luſt hath ſuch power in you; what Briars and Thornes, what plagues and ſtings they are in your hearts! You pray, and you mourn, and groan, and ſigh in your ſelves, waiting for your redemption from this bondage and miſery. Oh for an humble heart; oh for a broken mortified ſpirit! oh this earthlineſs, this envy, this peeviſhneſs, this ſlothfulneſs! I am weary of my life becauſe of theſe daughters of *Heth*. Wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from this body of death? Why, would you be delivered?

Be

Be patient under Afflictions; they are the *Executioners* sent from God to slay your Enemies, the *Medicines* sent from your *Physitian* to cure your *Diseases:* Never quarrel with Affliction, unless you Resolve to befriend *Corruption.* What, will you be so foolish, as not to be patient of your *Disease*, nor your *Remedy*; either bear the Cross, or else never make your selves believe, but you can bear your sins well enough? Whatever your Complaints are, 'tis a sign they come not very deep; 'Tis an Argument, that sinne sits light, where the cross lies so unsupportably heavy.

4. Your *patient suffering*, will be your *Triumph over Temptation:* A *patient Christian* is a *Conquerour* over all the World. By this alone, naked *Job* overcame the Devil: When Sathan and his Instruments have persecuted you into patience, they have therein brought their Necks under your Feet. This Brazen Wall will make their shot recoil on their own heads and hearts: Your Patience will be a Shield to yours, and a Sword in your Enemies Souls. Be patient, and you have won the field, and gotten the day. They will have no hope to drive you to sin, where they see you can suffer. This was *Job*'s Triumph, and shall be yours; *In all this* Job *sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.* You may now make your boast in the words of the Apostle, *Rom.* 8. 35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Perill, or Sword? In all these things, we are more than Conquerours through him that loved us.*

5. Your *patient suffering*, will be *the improvement of your Sanctification*, Heb. 12. 9, 10. *We have had Fa-*

Fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them Reverence: Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live? For they verily, for a few days, chasten'd us after their pleasure; but he, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his Holiness. The Fathers of our flesh correct us, and so doth the Father of Spirits; they, at their pleasure; he, for our profit. You'l say, it may be, for what profit? What profit is there in our Blood? in our Bonds, in our Poverty? Why, there is this profit; we are hereby made partakers of his Holiness. There's seldom any towardliness in a Child, till it be whipt into him. God's *School of Affliction*, is a *Nursery* for *Heaven*: Were it not for his *House of Correction*, *Sion* would quickly become as *Sodom*. Seldom does any come out thence, but their Complexion shews where they have been. 'Tis with them that feel the Hand of the Lord, as 'twas with him that saw his Face; his Face did shine; his very spitting in their Faces, doth wash them the cleaner. Of all Saints, there are none raised so high towards the Third Heaven, as those that have been in the Deep: No Providences give such a lift to the Soul, as those that most humble.

Christians, What ever pains you travail under, believe it, the Births may be such, as will make you forget your Sorrow.

I have heard of an Holy Woman, who used to compare her Afflictions to her Children; They both put her to great pain in the bearing; but as she knew not which of her Children to be without, notwithstanding her Trouble in the bringing forth, so neither which of her Afflictions she could have wanted, notwithstand the Sorrow they put her to in the bearing

ing, *Heb.* 12. 11. *No chaſtning for the preſent is joyous but grievous; but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteouſneſs, to them that are exerciſed thereby.*

Oh when you ſee the Fruit, where then will your Sorrow be? *Joh.* 16. 21. *A Woman when ſhe is in Travail hath Sorrow, becauſe her hour is come; but as ſoon as ſhe is deliver'd of the Child, ſhe remembreth no more the anguiſh, for joy that a Man-child is born into the World.*

If the *Joy* of the Birth will make you *forget*, why ſhould not the *hope* of the Birth make you to bear the pain?

Beloved, Would you bring forth Fruit unto God, and will you not bear the Plough and the Harrow? Will you expect an Harveſt, and yet muſt God let you lye Fallow, and ſtill ſow among Thorns? Let me ask you, and anſwer deliberately: Would you be more holy than you are, more fruitful than you are, or would you not? If you would not, you are no Chriſtian; *Si dixeris ſufficit, deficiſti:* If you would, is that Deſire *conditional*? You would increaſe, ſo it coſt you not overmuch labour and pain; That deſire comes to juſt ſo much, as no deſire at all: Or is your deſire of an increaſe, *abſolute*? Would you be more holy, whatever it coſt you: Do you ſo prize, and love an holy, and fruitful life, that you are heartily content, that God ſhould take his own courſe with you, ſhould take any courſe that's needful, to bring you on to it? Can you freely ſay, Oh Lord, I am weary of this Trifling, I am weary of this dead and barren life; Lord quicken me, Lord inlarge me, Lord perfect thy work, and fulfill in me all thy good pleaſure of thy Will: So thou wilt but hear

me

me in this thing, I freely put it into thy hand, to take thine own way, and use thine own means. Use the Word, or the Rod. Command me, or chastise me, spare not this flesh for all its crying, strip me of what thou wilt, inflict on me what thou wilt, throw me whither thou pleasest, let me not want the most bitter Pill that's needful, any thing, any thing Lord; I hope I can be poor, if thou will have me so; I can be in pain, in disgrace, if thou will have me: But I cannot be unholy, I cannot bear it to be such a starveling in the state of my Soul. Lord, for more holiness, Lord for more life, and care, and zeal, and fruit, let me have it, upon what terms thou pleasest; onely let me have it. Can you say thus to the Lord? I hope you can; what, and yet be displeased, if he take you at your word? can you pray thus, and yet repine and murmur that the Lord hears your Prayers? Christian, when the Lord comes to deal roughly with thee, entertain his chastisements, whatever they be, with this thought. Now the Lord is about to give me my hearts desire; now is my day of hope. This distress, this sorrow and anguish, the Lord hath brought upon me, may be come to perform that work which I have long'd to see: What the Word hath been so long a doing, and yet is not done. What Sacraments, Prayers, Mercies, have been so long a doing, and yet is not done. Now is the time, this may be the means to bring it about. This bitter Cup hath health in the bottom; this Plough, and these deep furrows it makes, look towards an Harvest. The work is doing that I have been so long a begging. This froward, this senseless, this sloathful, this earthly, barren heart, which I feel to day, I hope now, in a little time, I shall be rid of

for ever. If this be the meaning of my troubles, I hope it is, I will wait, I will wait for this fruit, and if this be the fruit, oh welcome, welcome this bleſſed Providence.

6. Your patient ſuffering ſhall be *the advance of your glory*. Remember what I have told you already, Your ſuffering ſhall go into your reward; according to your deep poverty, ſo ſhall your riches be: As 'twas ſaid concerning *Babylon*, Rev. 18. 7. *How much ſhe hath glorified her ſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much ſorrow and torment give her.* So ſhall it be ſaid concerning you; How much they have been abaſed, and afflicted for me, ſo much Joy and Glory give them. As ſure as the perſecutings of the ungodly ſhall meet them in hell; ſo certainly ſhall the Perſecutions of the Righteous, meet them before the Throne of God. This ſhall be written on their everlaſting Crowns, *Here is the Patience of the Saints.*

By this time you ſee *Chriſtians*, that a ſuffering ſtate is not ſo formidable, nor patience under it ſo impoſſible, nor your impatience ſo excuſable, as your hearts are apt to tell you. Suffering you cannot avoid, but you may abide them; your carnal hearts will cry out, I can't endure, and therefore whatever ſhift I make, I muſt avoid them. The Goſpel tells you, You may endure; but (if you will be Chriſtians) you can't avoid them. *All that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt ſuffer perſecution.* Well, ſince it's thus, Gird up the loins of your Minds, and follow your Lord. Conſider him that endured ſuch contradictions of Sinners, and be not weary, nor faint in your Minds: The Captain of your Salvation was made perfect through ſufferings;

and

and (if ye will be patient) ſo ſhall you his followers. Turn to your ſtrong hold, ye *Priſoners of hope*; Prove to the World that your Faith is no fancy, nor your Rock a refuge of lies; that your profeſſion of holineſs is not a meer talk, or vapour. Fear not to bear yours, and thankfully accept your Lords Teſtimony; when the Lord hath fulfilled his ſad Predictions, let your faith and patience ſeal to the fulfilling his Promiſes. Whenever the hand of the Lord touches to the quick, and you feel in earneſt, that 'tis hot ſervice to be a Chriſtian: when your fleſh begins to fly in your face, and cryes out againſt your Soul, either as *Zipporah* againſt *Moſes a bloody Husband haſt thou been to me*; or as *Job's* Wife to him, *Curſe God and die*: chide it into ſilence; *Thou ſpeakeſt as one of the fooliſh Women ſpeaketh.* If it will ſtill kick, and fling, and groan out to thee, *doeſt thou ſtill retain thy integrity?* hearken not to it; leave it to groan alone; as thy fleſh hath left thy Soul to groan alone under ſin; ſo let thy Soul leave thy fleſh to groan alone, under affliction. While thy Soul is quiet, there's the glory of patience, though extremity of torment make thy fleſh to roar; nay the more the fleſh roars, and the Soul yet keeps ſilence, the more patience.

If your fears affright you, and prophecy to you before hand, oh I ſhall never be patient; if the foreſight be ſo dreadful, what will the encounter be? yet be not diſcouraged. You ſay you could be content to ſuffer, if you were ſure you could be patient; that is, you would venture into the water, if you had firſt learn'd to ſwim; why when you are in, then you will learn, and not before.

Tribulation worketh patience, where it findeth none; when you are in the fight, you'l find your Weapons; your very ſufferings will learn you to bear. 'Tis the fleſh that flings, and frets, but by that it hath been tamed in the houſe of affliction, it will be quieter. Be jealous of your ſelves while you will; let not fore-hand preſumption, hinder fore-hand preparation. But whileſt you ſuſpect your ſelves, diſtruſt not your God: follow the Cloud of Witneſſes, and lean on the Rock of Ages; and when you are put hardeſt to it, let your Soul take Sanctuary here, *When my fleſh and my heart faileth me, God is the ſtrength of mine heart, and my portion for ever.*

Laſtly, As that wherein I ſhall take in moſt of theſe former particulars. Let your lives anſwer that *Spirit of holineſs* which the Goſpel hath powred forth upon you; Let your lives be *gracious and holy lives.* Particularly,

1. Let the grace of the Goſpel be *viſible*, and conſpicuous in your lives; ſhew forth the vertues of him that hath called you out of darkneſs, into his marvellous light; Let your lives be the Image of that holy Doctrine, or the holding forth of that word of life, which you have received. Admire that grace of God which hath appeared to you; and let his Grace appear, and be admired in you; let Grace appear in you, in its

{ *Purity*,
{ *Power*.

1. In its *Purity*, repreſent your God, and your Chriſt, and your Religion, in its holineſs, to the World. Teach the World to love, or at leaſt, to reve-

reverence holineſs, by letting them ſee it before their eyes.

Holineſs hath ſuch a glory in it, that it will command reſpect and reverence, when it is clearly ſeen. Let your *paths* be pure; as God hath ſeparated you, ſo ſeparate your ſelves from the luſts of men, to the Law of your God. Keep your ſelves *upright in the ſight of God*; keep your ſelves *unſpotted of the World*; if they will be ſpotting of you, let it be onely with your beauty ſpots; your Wiſdom, Truth, Holineſs, Mercy, Meekneſs, Patience; the Excellencies, and Vertues of your God appearing upon you. Let this, that you are too pure, too preciſe, too tender, too watchful, too fearful of ſin, too zealous againſt ſin, be all they have to charge you with.

Keep thee from *thine own Iniquities*; ſay not ſo much as this, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved muſt be mine.* Kick out thy *Dalilahs*. Thou muſt part with thy darling, or thy God; Let there be no ſecret league, let there be no peace, betwixt thy Soul and any Iniquity; to which thou mayſt either ſteal out, to delight thee, or turn in to hide thee; let no iniquity be thy leiſure or protection; if when thou art purſued by a perſecuter, any ſin, as *Jael* to *Siſera*, ſhould call to thee, *turn in hither*, and thou mayſt eſcape, remember the nail, and the hammer; let no iniquity find a corner in thee to lodge in quiet, that thou mayſt not think to find a corner with it, where thou mayſt lodg in ſafety; ſay to all thy ſinful delights, and ſinful hopes, get you gone, I will neither love you, nor truſt you; however thy ſin may pleaſe thee, whatever it may promiſe thee, be ſure thou wilt find it a ſting in thy Soul, and a ſtain upon thy glory.

Keep your ſelves from the ſins of others, beware of the *Leaven*, of the proud *Phariſee*, of the formal and vain-glorious *Scribe*, of the extorting *Publican*, of the debauched *Prodigal*, the ambitious *Diotrephes*, the virulent *Tertullus*, the backſliding *Demas*; beware of all *Epidemical Leaven*, the ſickneſs of the Times you may live in: Take heed leſt you be drawn away with the Errours of the Wicked, and ſo ſwimming down the Stream, you fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs: Let ſinners come up to you, go not you down to them.

Let them never ſay of any of you, *The Man is become as one of us; our ſpot is become the ſpot of his Children.* Let your Lives be a rebuke to the ungodly World, whil'ſt you live as the Children of GOD, without rebuke in the midſt of the World.

2. In its *Power*; Let the power of Grace be ſeen, in its preſerving its ſelf, in its Being, and vigorous Exercise, againſt all the Powers of Hell: The ſtrength of a Man is ſeen in this, that he can bear Wind and Weather; can live any where, without impairing his Health: The ſtrength and mettal of a Sword is ſeen in this, that Iron will not turn its edge: True Grace is ſuch a Plant, that all the Weeds of the Field, and Thorns of the Forreſt, are not able to choke: That will indure not onely the Summers Heat, but the Winters Froſts.

Chriſtians, prove your Grace to be a right Plant, the right Seed, the Seed of God; let it bear up againſt all the World: Let not the *Winds* of *Perſecution* put out your Light, nor the *Waters* caſt out of the *Serpents* Mouth quench your Love, nor ſo much as cool your Zeal; eſpecially take heed, that the Dragon's Tail do not draw you down amongſt the *Falling*

ling Stars. You know what a World you live in; You know the old Quarrel, betwixt the *Seed* of the Woman, and the *Serpent*, both what it is, and that it hath been kept on foot, through all Ages, to this day. You know the [*White*] at which *Sathan*, and all his *Archers*, have been ſo long Levelling, and ſo hotly diſcharging; The *White Stone* in your Breaſts, the *White Robe* on your Backs: A good Conſcience, and a Holy Life, are the Mark, upon which all the Fury of Earth and Hell is ſpent. Oh now prove your Grace to be Grace, by its preſerving it ſelf againſt all this Violence. Let the Devil ſee you will be Holy, whether he wil or no: Let the evil world ſee, you wilbe godly, do what they can; though they may make you poor, and deſtitute, and naked, yet let them deſpair of ever making you ungodly: Let Grace hereby appear to be Grace, and the mighty power of God in you: Which that it may do,

2. Let Grace ripen towards Glory; let not the ſcorching Sun wither your Bloſſoms, but ripen your Fruit. If you would hold out, get you on: If you would not have your *ſomething* to come to *juſt nothing*, increaſe your *Store*. Let your Spark grow up into a Flame, your Grain of Muſtard-Seed into a Tree. I tell you a *Myſtery*, The talleſt Cedars on God's Mountain will beſt eſcape the Wind, whil'ſt the lower Shrubs are in greater danger of being overturned; if you would ſtand ſure, get you up on the higher ground.

Chriſtians, Befool the Devil, let him ſee himſelf a Loſer, by all his ſtirs he makes againſt you. It is not the firſt time, that his croſs Winds have prov'd the moſt auſpicious Gales, to put the Saints the ſooner into Harbour. What he hath intended for a *withering*

Storm, hath often prov'd a *fruitful Dew*: Thoſe very Clouds he expected ſhould *rain down Snares*, have often *drop'd down Fatneſs*: If you will go on, Hell ſhall help you forward; the Devil's Rods on your back, ſhall but help to mend your pace; his Thorns ſhall be Spurs in your ſides: By ſtripping you of your fleſhly Delights, he ſhall but ſtarve your Luſts, his Friends; his Burthens ſhall be your Ballaſt, to make your Courſe more ſteady: Chriſtians are ſeldom in ſuch a thriving and proſperous ſtate, as when they are juſt come out of the hands of a perſecuting Devil.

Chriſtians, grow in Grace; there's no Seaſon, but may be a growing Seaſon: *Grow in Grace, and in the knowledg of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*: Let that Living Spring, which is broken forth in you, be like the Waters of the Sanctuary, *Ezek.* 4.7. Which at their firſt Riſing, were but up to the Ankles; but a little further were up to the Knees, a little further they were up to the Loins, and at length they grew to a great River, Waters to ſwim in, the bottom whereof could not be felt. It may be the Waters of Grace do yet run low with thee, a little Bay will ſtop, or turn the ſtream; thou art yet gotten but to Ankle deep, or Knee deep, get thee on, ſtay not, till thy Spring become a River; let every Day, every Duty, every Experience, yea every Affliction, adde to thy ſtreams; that as the acceſſion of every little Brook to the main Channel, raiſes the Water as it paſſes along, ſo it may be with thy Soul; that the farther thou goeſt on, the fuller thy Banks may be, till thou comeſt to be like *Jordan* in the Harveſt, whoſe Waters fill all its Banks. To quicken thee on in this growth in Grace, conſider,

1. That

1. That a little Grace will make but poor work with thy mighty ſins; where Grace is low, Luſt is high; and how is an Infant like to ſtand before a Man of War?

2. That a little Grace will not ſuffice, to bear thee up in great Afflictions; that which thou may'ſt make a ſhift with in a Calm, will not ſerve thee in a Storm.

3. That a little Grace will be ſadly put to it, if ever thou come to have but little means of Grace.

4. That he that hath but little Grace, is like to have no Aſſurance that he hath any at all. If thou would'ſt have power over Corruption, if thou would'ſt ſtand in the Day of Temptation, if thou would'ſt not ſtarve in the day of Famine, if thou would'ſt have the comfort of the Grace thou haſt, let it grow up to its fuller ſtature; Grace, when it is come to Age, will ſpeak for it ſelf, and ſhift for it ſelf the better; which whil'ſt it is in its Infancy, neither knows, nor can help it ſelf.

Chriſtians, let your Grace grow, and let the *Fruits* of it increaſe: Let your Fields ripen to the Harveſt. I may ſay concerning Sinners, not as our Lord ſaid, *Behold, the Fields are already white to the Harveſt*; but behold the Fields are already *black* to the Harveſt. The Word is ready to be given; *Come, put in thy Sickle, the Harveſt is ripe, the wickedneſs is great.* The Fields of Tares are already black to the Harveſt: But oh when ſhall it be ſaid of you; *Behold the Fields are white to the Harveſt*? Shall evil Weeds grow ſo faſt, and ſhall onely the good Corn be at a ſtand?

Bre-

Brethren, Let your Fruits grow more *plentiful*, and more *perfect* daily: Let that Scripture be verified in you, *Prov.* 4. 18. *The path of the Just is a shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* Let your hearts be so fill'd with the fulness of God, that your Paths may drop fatness. Let it be said of you, as of the Spouse, *Cant.* 4. 18. and *Chap.* 5. 5. *Her Lips dropped as the Honey Comb, and her hands dropped sweet smelling Myrrhe.* Let your Lips drop as the Honey Comb; as you have drunk in the Milk and Honey, that comes down from above, so be ever dropping it down to others: Let something of the sweetness, something of the fatness, that you have receiv'd from above, be always dropping down: Be *dropping*, according to what you have *drank*: As you see Sinners, of whom 'tis said, *They drink iniquity*, to be always dropping iniquity; dropping Oaths, dropping Lies, dropping Scoffs and Reproaches: So let it be said of you, *They drink the Dew of Heaven, and this they are dropping down.* Let no Child, no Servant, no Friend, come into your Company, and go away without some sweet Drops from your Lips: A word of Heavenly Instruction, a gracious Admonition, a word of Encouragement, or a quickning Word, let them have; or lift up a prayer, and drop down a blessing upon them. Something or other of the *Dew of Heaven* let them feel flowing from our Lips.

Let your Lips *drop as the Honey Comb*, and your Hands *drop sweet smelling Myrrhe.* Let your Holy Practices, your Holy Examples, second, and set on your wholesom Counsels and Instructions. Let your words be savoury, and your works be gracious: Let

Lip

Lip and Life ſpeak the ſame things, and lead on the ſame way.

Chriſtians, By your nurſing up the Souls, and Fruits of others, you will ripen and increaſe your own. If you ſhould look on all the Fruit as little, which your ſelves have brought forth to God, you will have this to comfort you, That you have born more *upon your Brethren's knees*: The Fruits of thoſe Fields which you have planted, or water'd, will abound to your account.

Bring forth much Fruit unto God, and be much in *immediate converſe* with God, *Phil.* 3. 20. *Our Converſation is in Heaven.* Be more elevated and raiſed in your Spirits daily, above Things Senſual and Carnal.

{ Above Carnal Delights.
{ Above Carnal Diſcouragements.

1. Above *Carnal Delights*; Live more purely in the Spirit, let your Hearts be wrought up to ſuch a Spiritual Frame; That all the Joys, Pleaſures, and Comforts, of your Lives may be Spiritual. Let the Lord be all your delight, *Pſal.* 37. 5. Let it be with you as much as may be, as it is with the Saints already in Glory; to whom *God is all*; who being changed into his Image, and dwelling in his preſence, are ſatisfied in him. Let *God alone*, be as much to you, as *God and all the World*. Let the Faſhions, and Pleaſures, and Delights of this World, be ſo much beneath your Spirits, that it may neither be an abatement of your Joy, to want; nor an Addition to your Content, to poſſeſs them. Let the Light of all theſe lower

lower Sparks, be ſwallow'd up in God; when the Sun ſhines, all the Stars diſappear, and are not needed.

Lift up thine Eyes Chriſtian, and ſee, what pleaſures there are *within the Veil*: Come, drink thy fill of this new Wine, let thy Faith draw the Curtains of Eternity, and take a view of thoſe heights, & depths, and lengths, and breadths, of that Glory and Joy, which there it may diſcover. Look on him that *ſits on the Throne*, and thoſe everlaſting Treaſures of Light, Holineſs, Goodneſs, and Mercy, which are ſtreaming from his Face; on thoſe overflowing Bowels of Kindneſs and Compaſſion; on thoſe Rivers of pure and Eternal Pleaſures, Reſt, and Peace, that riſe from that Glorious Throne, and run through the City of God. Behold the *Tree of Life*, and feed thy Soul on its pretious Fruit, whoſe very Leaves are for the healing of Nations. Hearken to, and fill thine Ears and Heart with, thoſe Triumphs and Exultations, thoſe Raptures and Extaſies, of unſpeakable and glorious Joys; thoſe Bleſſings and Praiſings, thoſe Hallelujahs that are tuned upon the Hearts and Tongues of the *Heavenly Chore*, the glorious Angels, *and the Spirits of juſt men made perfect*, by the viſion and fruition of thy God, the God of Glory.

Look on, and poſſeſs, this Joy and Glory; Say to thy Soul, as *God* to *Abraham*, Gen. 13.14. *Lift up thine Eyes, and look from the place where thou art, Northward, and Southward, and Eaſtward, and Weſtward*, through all the Coaſts, and all the Dimenſions of the Bleſſed Land of Promiſe, and Holy City; and then ſay, *Come Soul, take up thy reſt here, all this is thine.*

Look

Look and love, love and long, long and hope, hope and rejoyce in hope, of this glory of God. Look on thy God, and never leave looking, till thou art changed into his Image, and ſatisfied with his Image; And here let thy delight and thy dwelling be.

2. Above all carnal diſcouragements, from any adverſaries, or dangers, wherewith you are baited and affrighted, as you walk in the Lord; let the joy of the Lord be your ſtrength, let your Sun be your ſhield, let your hope be your confidence, and fear not your duty nor danger. Look to your hope, and you will laugh at fear. Dwell in your Reward, and you will not be afraid to dwell in your Duty: But of this, a word more by and by. Thus much for general Directions.

2. I ſhall next give you ſome ſpecial Directions for your daily walk.

Generalls neceſſarily depend on, and ſubſiſt in, Particulars. As there can be no Religion in a Kingdome, unleſs it be firſt in particular Families, nor none in Families, unleſs it be in particular perſons; ſo a general courſe of Chriſtianity there cannot be, unleſs it be ſupported in our particular daily walk.

The Advice I am giving you, I have in part borrowed for your uſe, which ſome of you may poſſibly have received elſewhere.

Before I give you the particular Directions, I ſhall firſt premiſe theſe things:

1. Count upon this, That the Directions I am now giving you, (if you ever mean to bring it to any thing) will coſt you pains and labour: and how can you count your ſelves Chriſtians, if you refuſe to be at the neceſſary coſt of Chriſtianity? If you think

think to be Christians without labour, or if you will stand out from Christianity, to save your labour, you are alike wise in both. Either come to a Resolution to fall upon an industrious painful life, or 'twill be in vain to give you counsel.

2. Practice the Directions I shall give you in pursuance of your Covenant with God; wherein you have engaged to take the strictest severest Laws of Christ, for the Rule of your Life. What I am pressing on you, for the matter of it, is no more than you have bound your selves to, as Christians. Remember your Bonds, and let this holy practice be followed on by you, as the paying your Vows. Remember daily, the Vows of God are upon you, and there is not any material thing here prescribed to you, which falls not under your vows. Your Covenant, if your eye be much upon it, will be a cord to hold you to your work.

3. Press hard for sensible Communion with God in all your Duties.

4. Keep up a spiritual and holy Frame from Duty to Duty. Remember what I have elsewhere spoken to you more at large, on these two Particulars. See that there be Religion in your Duties, and confine not your Religion to your Duties.

5. Be Watchful. The Life of all Religion lies much here; whatever you resolve upon, will come to nothing without it. Watchfulness is the Executioner of your Will. Let your eye be upon your Rule, and your Work. Especially watch against your *prevailing sins*. There's no Christian that observes himself, but may find some one sin or more, that in regard of their power over him, are taller by the head and shoulders than all the rest. In some

Pride,

Pride, in others *Worldlineſs*, in others *Paſſion*, in others *Slothfulneſs*. It may be, if thou ſearcheſt, ſome one of theſe four, or poſſibly ſome other, may be it, that by a Specialty thou may'ſt call [*thine Iniquity.*] Find out what it is, and know, that there thy main Work lyes. In vain wilt thou ſtrive in other duties, till that which hinders be removed out of the way. *Fight neither againſt ſmall nor great, but againſt the King of Iſrael.* Where the Enemy moſt ordinarily makes his breach upon thee, ſet the ſtronger Guard. Let thy daily conflicts be here, and obſerve diligently, with what ſucceſs.

6. Walk on thy courſe in the Name and ſtrength of the Lord Jeſus. Live by Faith. Depend on Chriſt for the aſſiſtance of his mighty Spirit. Forget not this, for otherwiſe thou wilt go but lamely on.

Theſe things premiſed, I ſhall now give you the particular Directions.

1. Directions for the Evening.

Every Evening before you ſleep, withdraw your ſelves from the World, and having ſet your hearts as in the Preſence of God, Charge them before God, to anſwer to theſe following Interrogatories.

1. Concerning your Duties.

Q. 1. Did not God find me on my bed, when he expected me on my knees?

2. Was there not more of Cuſtome and Faſhion, than of Conſcience and Affection, either in my Secret, or Family Duties?

2. Had

3. Had I any ſenſible Communion with God in my duties?

4. Have I not neglected, or been careleſs and overly in reading the Word, and Holy Meditation?

2. Concerning your Sins.

Q. 1. Do I live in nothing, that I know to be a ſin?

2. Have I kept me from MINE Iniquity? What victory have I yet gotten over it?

3. Am I a mourner for mine own, and the ſins of the Land?

3. Concerning your Temptations.

Q. 1. Have I feared, watched againſt, and not run into temptation?

2. What Temptations have I overcome this day?

3. Have I had a care of my Company?

4. Concerning your Heart.

Q. 1. Have I held mine heart in a ſerious, ſpiritual, gracious frame? have my calls to Duty ever found me in a preparation to Duty?

2. Hath the Lord been ever before mine eyes, and Eternity upon mine heart?

3. Have I been much in holy Ejaculations?

4. Have I not given liberty to the workings of Pride, Sinful anger, Diſcontent, or Impatience?

5. Have I made conſcience of evil thoughts?

5. Con-

5. Concerning Conſcience.

Q. 1. Hath my Conſcience neither been blind nor dumb, nor my heart deaf or headſtrong againſt it?

2. Have I done nothing againſt, nor with a doubting Conſcience?

3. Have I neither defiled mine own, nor wittingly ſcandalized my Brother's, Conſcience?

6. Concerning your Tongue.

Q. 1. Have I bridled my Tongue?

2. Have I ſpoken Evil of no man?

3. Hath the Law of the Lord been in my mouth, as I ſate in mine Houſe, or went by the Way, as I was lying down, and riſing up?

7. Concerning your Talents.

Q. 1. Have I not waſted or vainly ſpent any part of my Eſtate? hath neither my Pride had a ſhare, nor my Appetite more than its ſhare?

2. Have I not ſent Chriſt away without an Alms, when I had it by me?

3. Have I redeemed my time from

Needleſs Viſits.
Idle Imaginations.
Fruitleſs Diſcourſe, and
Unneceſſary Sleep?

4. Have I not loſt an opportunity this day, of doing or receiving good? have I not neglected to exhort or reprove, when occaſion hath been given? and if I have been reproved, how have I born it?

8. Concerning your Tables.

Q. 1. Did I not ſit down, with no higher ends than a Beaſt, only to pleaſe my appetite? Did I eat and drink to the Glory of God?

2. Did I not eat or drink to exceſs?

3. Did I not riſe from the Table with out letting fall any thing of God there?

4. Did I not mock God, when I pretended to crave a Bleſſing, or return Thanks?

9. Concerning your Calling.

Q. 1. Have I been ſerving the Lord this day, in my particular Calling?

2. Have I not been Idle?

3. Have I not over eagerly minded my earthly affairs?

4. Have I defrauded no man, wronged no man?

5. Have I dropped never a Lye, no broken promiſe in all my dealings?

10. Concerning your Relations.

Q. Have I Faithfully discharged, and done nothing against my duty to my Relations? Have I behaved my self

As a Christian { Husband, Wife, Parent, Child, Master, Servant ?

11. Concerning your carriage to those Within.

Q. Have I carried my self towards all Saints,
1. Lovingly,
Delighting in them.
Bearing with them.
Covering their Infirmities.

2. Peaceably, not provoking them to Envy?
3. Profitably, provoking them to love and good works?

12. Concerning your carriage to those Without.

Q. Have I carried my self to those without,
1. Wisely, that they have not been a snare to me, nor I through my fault, become a Prey unto them.

2. Inoffensively: Have I not been a stumbling-block to them?

3. Courteously and compassionately, that I might the better win upon them?

3. Concerning Providences.

Q. 1. Have I diligently observed all the remarkable Providences of God towards me, especially such as have come in, as the Returns of Prayer?

2. Have I been thankful for my daily Mercies?

3. Have I born this dayes crosses?

14. Concerning the use of your Liberty.

Q. Have I kept my self far enough within my bounds?

In Summe,

Q. 1. What have I done for God or my Soul this day? have I not lost one day more?

2. Have I led, this day

A { Diligent / Watchful / Self-denying } Life,

Direction

Directions for the Morning.

1. If through neceſſity or careleſneſs, you have omitted the reading and weighing theſe Queſtions in the Evening, be ſure to do it now.

2. Ask thy ſelf. What Sins have I committed? what Duties have I omitted? Againſt which of theſe Rules have I offended, the day foregoing? And renew thy Repentance, and double thy Watch.

3. Examine, whether God were firſt and laſt in thy Thoughts, Morning and Evening.

4. Be careful to ſet thine Ends right, for all the day.

An *Advertiſement.*

If you want time to make daily enquiry upon every one of the forementioned Particulars, (they being ſo many) ſet a mark upon, or write out ſuch of them, as moſt eſpecially concern your Caſe, and let not them be forgotten. Think not thy ſelf excuſed from this courſe, becauſe 'tis too long; when, if need be, thou may'ſt thus make it ſhorter: Better cut ſhort, than wholly give out.

For the help of the weaker, I ſhall gather out theſe few of the chief Interrogatories, which when they are ſtraitned for time, they may only uſe; and to which they may add more as they have occaſion and opportunity.

Q. 1. Was I ſerious, and had I any ſenſible Communion with God, this day, in my Secret, and Family Duties?

2. Hath it been my care to keep mine heart in an holy Frame, from Duty to Duty?

3. Have I been much in holy Ejaculations?

4. Have I not given liberty to the working of Pride, ſinful Anger, Diſcontent, or Impatience; nor ſo much as to vain Thoughts?

5. Have I not inordinately minded Earthly things?

6. Have I kept me from [*Mine*] Iniquity, and not liv'd in any known ſin?

7. Have I wronged no man in word nor deed?

8. Have I been temperate and ſelf-denying in the uſe of the Creatures?

9. Hath

9. Hath the Law of the Lord been much in my mouth?

10. Have I not ſent Chriſt away without an Alms, when I had it by me?

11. Have I not loſt an opportunity of doing or receiving good?

12. Have I not neglected nor done any thing againſt my duty to my Relations?

13. What have I done for God or my Soul this day? have I not loſt one day more?

14. Have I been diligent and watchful?

Chriſtians, here is a courſe preſcribed, which by the ordinary aſſiſtance, which the Lord doth not deny, you may take up if you will; and which if you conſcientiouſly obſerve, will be, without doubt through the bleſſing of God, attended with great ſucceſs. And thoſe that do not take up this courſe, or ſome other equivalent to it, let them never think to eaſe their hearts, by idle complaints, I can't attain to ſuch a holy, even, fruitful, heavenly life, as I deſire, I would, but I cannot; God will abhorr ſuch lazy Complaints, and look upon them as they are, a meer device to keep you quiet under a ſloathful heart.

Set your whole Duty daily before your eyes, charge it upon your hearts, take an account of your ſelves, how you diſcharge it; ſet upon it as that which is no other than you have vowed to the Lord; commit your ſelves and your waies to him for ſucceſs: and if this doth not mightily conduce to advance you in point of holineſs, and eſtabliſh you in point of peace, then ſay, that both the Precepts and Promiſes of the Goſpel have deceived you.

And thus I have ſet before you that holy Converſation which becometh the Goſpel. Take up this holy Courſe, let this be your Life you mean to lead; and let it be carried on,

In an holy Union.
In an United Contention.
In an Holy Boldneſs.

1. In an holy Union; So the Apoſtle there adds, *Stand faſt in one ſpirit with one mind.* Never look to thrive in Grace, if you do not live in Peace. The decayes of Chriſtianity lye much upon the ſcore of the diviſions of Chriſtians. The Devil hath alſo taken up that Maxim, *Divide et Impera*, Rent them and Ruine them. The reaſon why our love is ſo cold, is becauſe our differences are ſo hot. The reaſon of ſo little zeal againſt ſin, hath been the great ſtrife among Brethren. The Combinations of Sinners have not ſo much prejudiced the power of holineſs, as the Contentions of Saints. There are not a few who go under the name of Saints, that have maintained diſputes about Religion ſo long, till they have diſputed themſelves out of all Religion; their ſearching

ſearching for Truth, hath been the loſs of both love and life.

Chriſtians, if ever you would be any thing, be one; be of one heart, of one mind, *holding the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace.* It were greatly to be deſired, that the people of God were both of *one heart*, and *of one way*: But if this may not yet be, if there cannot be *Uniformity*, yet let there be *Unity*, betwixt all that fear the Lord in truth.

A few words I ſhall leave with you for your direction herein:

1. Divide not from the Head, to unite with any pretended Members; hold not with them, that hold not with the Head. Sell not Truth, clear, fundamental Truth, to buy Peace.

2. Divide not from real Members, leſt you hereby prove your diviſion from the Head. Chriſt hath but one body, if you be not in union with the body, you are divided from the head.

3. See the head in every member; ſee Chriſt in every Saint.

4. Prize Chriſt where ever you ſee him. Love Chriſt, and love his Image; if you will not ſlight Chriſt, ſlight not any Saint. See'ſt thou an humble, meek, patient, broken-hearted, ſelf-denying, mortified Chriſtian; in whatſoever unpleaſing form (as to matters circumſtantiall) he appears, deſpiſe him not, reject him not.

5. Prize

5. Prize Peace and Union, as the ſtrength and honour of the Body.

6. Purſue Peace and Union, with the utmoſt ſtrength of thy Soul. And that you may obtain it,

1. Let all parties that are named of Chriſt, *be humbled* under former Diviſions. What Peace ſo long as God is angry? Oh how have we provoked the Lord, by provoking one another! Let him only who hath been without ſin in this matter, be without ſorrow and ſhame.

Sure they are hard hearts, who are not broken under ſuch breaches. Let us not miſtake our ſelves, nor miſ-call that Zeal for God, which God will call Pride, and peeviſhneſs.

I ſpeak not againſt our being offended, either with errour or iniquity; we may not call evil, good; or darkneſs light, for peace ſake; but at our unreaſonable paſſions, againſt whom we ſuppoſe erring Brethren.

If the Reproach of the Goſpel, the hardning of the perverſe, the ſtumbling of the weak, if the hindring of Edification, the promoting of Confuſion, and every evil work, which have been the ſad *Effects* of our Diviſions; if Pride and Haughtineſs, if Vanity and Wantonneſs, if Envy and Uncharitableneſs, which have been the *Womb* from which our Contentions have ſprung, be matter of Humiliation, then ſure we had need be brought upon our knees: We muſt be melted, e're we can be moulded up into one.

2. Let

2. Let all parties unite ſincerely in *their ends*: Let the honour of Chriſt, the advancement of practical Godlineſs, the deſtruction of the intereſt of the fleſh, the edification of the whole body, in Faith and Holineſs, be look'd at with a ſingle Eye, and purſued with a plain and honeſt heart; Let not the intereſt of a party, the affection of Superiority and Dominion, the carrying on of ſelfiſh or fleſhly Deſigns, let *the God*, or *the Chriſt*, you are driving for, unbyaſs your Spirits, take the right mark, and let your motions be ſincerely level'd at it. If we were once ſet right in our ends, an accommodation of all our differences, about the means, would be more facile and feiſable, *Prov.* 11.3,5. *The integrity of the upright ſhall guide him, the Righteouſneſs of the perfect ſhall direct his way.* Humble, ſingle, honeſt hearts, are moſt like to hit upon the good and honeſt way: if we had nothing to do, but to pleaſe the Lord, we ſhould not have much to do to pleaſe one another.

3. Let all parties unite in this Rule, *Do as you would be done by*; that is, as being well informed, and adviſed, and freed from evil, and diſcompoſed Affections, (for ſo the Rule is to be underſtood) you would that Men ſhould do unto you: Allow to others, what you challenge to your ſelves; or would, if you were in their Circumſtances: Deny not what you would demand: The ſame Liberty, the ſame Charity that you would expect from other Chriſtians, allow to them.

4. No longer tie up Chriſt *to a party*. Say not, *Lo here is Chriſt, and not there*: Say of all *Believers*, though

though of different Forms, *As we are Chriſts, ſo they are Chriſts.* Of all the Subdiviſions of *Proteſtants*, that are conſiderable amongſt us, there's no party, the union with which makes us, or the ſeparation from which unmakes us, Chriſtians. We had need to have more to ſhew for our Chriſtianity, than that we are *Presbyterians*, *Independents*, *Anabaptiſts*, *Epiſcopal*, or *Eraſtians*; and the Devil muſt have more to prove us no Chriſtians, than this, that we are in union with either of theſe, or in ſeparation from them.

5. In matters circumſtantial, be not over-haſty in ſtamping a *Jus Divinum* on Things diſputable and doubtful: Put no more weight, nor a greater neceſſity, on any thing, than God hath evidently put on it; and ſpend no more of your zeal about it, than is proportionable to its weight and evidence.

6. Allow for the imperfect ſtate the Church is in, we know but in part; and till that which is perfect is come, and that which is imperfect is done away, we muſt bear with one another, if in any things we be otherwiſe minded.

7. Stretch not your Authority *beyond your Line*, take not too much upon you: Think not to bring all others, in every thing, to your Standard; impoſe not your Conſciences, as a Law upon others.

8. Put not Conſcience to the ill office of being a meer *Make-bate*, catch not up every Notion, and preſently charge it upon Conſcience, as that which muſt be maintained, though to the greateſt prejudice of

of the whole Intereſt of Religion, and ſo rent and run away from all thoſe that agree not with you. Be not raſh, be not heady; be tender, but be wary; be well inſtructed, if you will be truly tender: firſt carefully inform thy Conſcience, and then peaceably follow it.

Of what is that Conſcience tender, that is not tender of making Wounds and Rents, in the Body of Chriſt?

9. Beware of *Cenſurings* and *Judgings*, of biting and devouring one another. *If ye bite, and devour one another, ye ſhall be conſumed one of another.* Let him that is without fault, caſt the firſt ſtone at his *Erring Brother*. Be not bitter againſt the bitterneſs of others: if others ſowerneſs *offend thee*, yet let it not *leaven thee*: Be not reviled into a Reviler, ſcoffed into a Scoffer; overcome Evil with Goodneſs: 'Tis not ſeldom that our Invectives againſt others Bitterneſs, are more keen and cutting, than what we complain of: Juſtifie not what thou judgeſt; Practiſe not thy ſelf, what in the ſame Breath thou condemneſt in thy *Brethren*: Throw not back thy *Brother's* Fire-balls in his face, leſt in cenſuring him, thou be alſo thine own Judge: Purſue not matters in difference over hotly, but learn modeſtly and meekly to differ, where you cannot agree.

10. Let your Converſation be ſo holy, humble, and heavenly, carry your ſelves in ſuch ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, towards God, towards one another, and towards all men, that you may command each other to believe, that however you agree not about

about your *Mother*, yet you are all the Children of the ſame *Father*; that you are of God, and that the Spirit of the Living God dwelleth in you.

11. Hold *Communion* in the Things wherein you agree, and *Charity* where you differ: May you not pray, and faſt, and hear, and hold *Chriſtian Conferences* together? Sure there is not overmuch of Goſpel Spirit, where this will not be granted?

12. Impoſe not on each other any hard and unneceſſary *Conditions* of your communion. Suppoſe, upon your differing Judgments, there be in ſome things different practices, which ſome of you judge leſs warrantable, whil'ſt the Conſciences of others allow and uſe; preſs not the relinquiſhing ſuch queſtionable practices, as the condition of your communion; eſpecially, if they be not mingled with the Duties wherein you joyn, but are uſed by any of you, at other times, or in other Aſſemblies. Excommunicate not them from you, excommunicate not your ſelves from them, with whom Chriſt holds Communion. Judge not that Chriſt withdraws, from all thoſe, who are not in every thing, of your Mind and Way. Deſtroy not all communion, by ſeeking after a purer, than in this our imperfect ſtate, we ſhall ever attain. According to this principle, (No Communion at all, if not in all) where ſhall we reſt? In all Societies ſomething will offend.

13. And laſtly, in your communion receive not one another *to doubtful Diſputations*: Let your *Prayers*, *Conferences*, and all Holy *Exercises*, be ſtudiouſly

ſo

ſo managed, that there may be a ſweet Accord of your Spirits therein: Come not together to ſtrengthen Parties, or propagate Opinions: Let all matters of Controverſie be waved; and hereof let there be ſuch mutual Aſſurance given aforehand, that you may be together, without fear of becoming Thorns or Snares one to another: Which, if it be not unanimouſly conſented to, and inviolably obſerved, your communion will be impoſſible, or dangerous.

Chriſtians, Are the clear and fundamental Truths of the Goſpel, and the more neceſſary and weighty Duties of Religion, ſufficiently underſtood and practiſed? Are your Souls ſafe? Is your Calling and Election ſure? Is the Love, and Life, and Zeal of God, grown up to that maturity, that you need not mutual help this way? Have you any ſpare time from theſe things, to ſpend in perplexing Controverſies? Build up one another in your moſt Holy Faith, provoke one another to Love, and to good Works, encourage, eſtabliſh, and ſtrengthen one another in the known ways of Holineſs, and if you find not this both better work, and work enough for you, then take your Liberty.

Theſe things do, live in peace, and love, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you.

Hear, oh all ye Friends of Chriſt, by what oblique Names ſoever unhappily diſtinguiſhed! will you come and be Friends one with another? Are you for peace? Your God is the *God of Peace*: Your Jeſus is the *Prince of Peace*: Your Goſpel is the *Go-*

ſpel

ſpel of Peace; and will you not be perſwaded to be *Sons of Peace*? Your God is one, your Mediator is one, your Faith one, your Baptiſm one, your Hope one; you are one Body, one Spirit, and will you not yet be one Soul?

Oh how hopeful would our Condition be, were our Hearts generally ſet upon peace! We ſhould certainly obtain, did we more reſolvedly purſue it: and what ſhould hinder? Have you not yet enough of your Contentions, and Quarrellings? Have not your Souls been ſufficiently neglected, your Luſts ſtrengthned, your Faith weakned, your Love withered, your Comforts waſted, your Names blemiſh'd, your Holy Profeſſion blamed? Hath not your God been ſufficiently provoked, and the Devil ſufficiently gratified? Are your Bellies ſo filled with Gall, and your Mouths with Gravel, and have you not yet enough of your Contentions?

Chriſtians, Slight not theſe Counſells and Warnings. As you would prove your ſelves the Friends of Chriſt, be ye followers of peace. Study, oh ſtudy theſe things that make for peace. *Follow peace with all men, as much as in you is*, but eſpecially with the houſhold of Faith. *Let there be no longer ſtrife betwixt us, for we are brethren.*

Yet alwaies remember, I am preſſing you to an *holy* Union; whil'ſt I perſwade you to follow peace, I muſt ſtill add [*and holineſs*:] I perſwade you not to purſue *peace*, upon tearms diſhonourable or prejudicial to *Truth*; They muſt have both together, that will be bleſſed in either: Truth without Peace, is as a Jewel without its Cabinet; Peace without Truth, is as a Cabinet with nothing in it. Peace

with

without holineſs, is as a fair and promiſing ſhell, with a rotten, or worm-eaten kernell; holineſſe without peace, is as a pretious kernel, under a crack'd and broken ſhell.

They that have peace without truth, have nothing worth the ſecuring; they that have truth without peace, have little ſecurity for what they have. Peace without truth, is beauty without worth; Truth without peace, is worth with its beauty marred. Let both go together, and then they will be, both the *Columna Eccleſiæ*, the Pillar of the Church, rendring it conſiſtent within it ſelf; and the *Corona Eccleſiæ*, its Crown, rendring it comely and glorious before the World.

Be it thus with us, and then Sathan look to thy ſelf, thy kingdom ſhall down amain; when thou canſt no longer hold up *diviſion*, thou loſeſt thy *dominion*. Then Saints lift up your heads, your Communion ſhall be ſweet, your glory ſhall be great, your light ſhall ſhine, your fruit ſhall abound, the ſmell of your ſpices ſhall flow forth; your adverſaries ſhall envy, and your King ſhall greatly delight to ſee your beauty. Oh may this Grace, this Peace be granted us from the Lord; and let all that love the proſperity of *Sion*, ſay *Amen*.

2. In an *united Contention*. *Striving together* (ſaith the Apoſtle) for *the Faith of the Goſpel*. Unite, but ſtrive; ſtrive not one againſt another; Chriſtian againſt Chriſtian, but ſtrive together; Let your *Contention* be in *Communion*. *Strive together againſt ſin*, and unbelief; againſt hypocriſie, and earthlineſs; ſtrive againſt ſtrife, and debate, and envyings, and

judgings; *strive together with God*, in your prayers, and supplications: We often pray, but our prayers do not agree: by keeping at such distance, we know not one anothers hearts, and are, so many men, so many minds; every one prayes according to his single apprehension, and affections: What one prayes, another unprayes; insomuch that we should put the Lord to do contradictions, if he must give particular answers to all our prayers. And possibly, that may be the reason, why the Lord defers his answer so long, he will stay till we are better agreed what we would have. *Matth.* 18. 19. *If two of you agree on earth, touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.* Strive together in all holy and united endeavours, to comfort, confirm and establish one another in the faith of the Gospel. Keep up the Communion of Saints, and an united Contention against Sin and Unbelief; Remember *Heb.* 10. 25.

3. In an holy boldness, *in nothing terrified by your adversaries.* In nothing, that is, either *in no degree*; not at all terrified: or else in nothing, *that you have to do*; be frighted out of no part of your duty: or else *at nothing that they do*, or threaten to do against you. Be not afraid to be holy. Tell your adversaries, when they have said and done their worst, you must, and you will, make bold to serve your God. Fear them not, and they cannot hurt you; they never hurt you, unless they divert you from your duty.

To establish your hearts in this holy boldness, and against your carnal fears,

1. Con-

1. Conſider, That,

1. By how much the more you fear God, by ſo much the leſs you will fear men.

2. By how much the more your fear ſin, by ſo much the leſs you will fear trouble.

3. By how much the leſs your adverſaries fear God, by ſo much the leſs need you to fear them.

2. Believe: *Pſal.* 27. 13. *I had fainted, but that I believed.* Faith is a Buckler againſt fears and faintings, *Epheſ.* 6. 16. *Above all, take the ſhield of faith, whereby you ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devill.*

[*The Shield of faith*] A ſhield is a Wall of partition, interpoſed betwixt a perſon and harm; 'Tis only our apprehenſions of harm that raiſe our fear: Faith will ſave a Chriſtian harmleſs, and thereby preſerve him fearleſs. The Shield is ordain'd for a ſecurity to all parts, and againſt all aſſaults. Some pieces of our armour are appropriated to one part only; the Helmet is for the head, the Breaſt-plate for the breaſt, the Girdle for the loins, the Shooes for the feet; but the Shield is a moveable, that is to be lifted up, where ever the blow comes. Faith is an univerſal ſecurity.

Faith may be ſaid to be a Shield,

1. Inſtrumentally: As it provides us of a ſhield, as it lifts up a ſhield, and ſets a guard upon the Soul to ſecure it. It holds up *Chriſt* for a Shield; it holds

up the *Promiſes* for a Shield: the very *Commands*, and *Inſtitutions*, of God, for a Shield, and Safe-guard to the Soul.

Sometimes the *ſenſe of guilt* aſſails and weakens the heart: It is not ſo much any thing without us, as ſomething within us, that raiſes our fears. How ſmall a matter will fright a guilty Soul? Guilt will make every ſtroke a ſtab. It's the barb of the arrow, the venome on the dart, or the ſore of the heart, that makes every ſtroke formidable and terrible. 'Tis the guiltleſs Soul that hath courage, and boldneſs. *Hic murus ahaneus eſto*—— Now againſt this dreadfull Dart, Faith holds up a Buckler, with a *Crucified Jeſus* upon it; and ſo that's quenched.

Sometimes *darkneſs* and uncertainties, about the way that we are in, raiſes our fear. A Chriſtian that knowes himſelf in his duty, in his way, is out of fear. Clearneſs gives boldneſs. Whil'ſt we queſtion the warrantableneſs of the way we are in, every ſhadow of danger will ſhake us: Againſt ſuch fears, Faith holds up a buckler, with this Inſcription, *Have not I Commanded thee?* It ſhews the Command, and in that, our warrant, and in our warrant our ſecurity.

When we queſtion whether our *Worſhip*, for which we are like to ſuffer, be right or no, Faith holds up *an Inſtitution* for our Shield.

If this Fear (oh I ſhall not hold out, I ſhall deny my Lord, and his Faith, if put to it) aſſails the Soul; here Faith holds up *the Promiſe* for a Buckler: *He hath ſaid, I will not fail thee, nor forſake thee: ſo that we may boldly ſay, The Lord is my helper.*

2. For-

2. Formally; Faith not only lifts up a Shield, but is our Shield; The very believing in a crucified Jeſus; the very believing the Command, the Inſtitution, the promiſe, ſtayes and ſupports the heart, againſt whatſoever may befall it; *I had fainted, but that I believed.*

Chriſtians, whatever your duties, difficulties, deſpondencies, ſtraits, temptations, afflictions, weakneſſes, are; believe, and you ſhall be carried through; believe, and you ſhall be eſtabliſhed: Believe in Chriſt, and you ſhall dare to follow Chriſt; believe in Chriſt, and you ſhall go through with Chriſt, and hold out to the end. Believe, and you ſhall neither fear, faint, nor fall. Your Faith will both keep you *faultleſs*, and ſave you *harmleſs*, and thereby ſecure you from ſinking, and fainting, in your minds.

If this be not enough, let me add, That Faith will yet farther ſcatter all your fears, by this double Act:

1. It will put your reward into your hands.
2. It will put all your troubles to a preſent end.

1. It will put your reward into your hand; it will ſet the Crown on your head, even whil'ſt the Croſs is on your back. Faith makes things to come, preſent, *Heb.* 11. 1. It is the ſubſiſtence, or being, of things hoped for; it gives being to the good things promiſed, before they are. Hope carries the eye to the object; looks on things to come, as to come. Faith brings the object to the eye, looks on things to come, as come; it looks on diſtance of time, as God looks on it; on a thouſand years but as one day. It looks on God's *ſaying* and *doing*, on God's promiſing,

and performing, as all one. It antidates Glory, and gives a kind of preſent poſſeſſion of it in hand, *Rom.* 8. (*In*) *all theſe things we are more than Conquerours:* In *Tribulation*, in *Perſecution*, in *Famine*, in *Nakedneſs*; [*In*] *all theſe things we are more than Conquerours:* Not onely afterwards we ſhall be, but in all theſe things, even whil'ſt we are under them, *we are more than Conquerours:* The Conqueſt is obtained in the very entrance of the Combat. *This is the Victory that overcometh the World even our Faith.* Believe Chriſtian, and thy *Faith* will be thy *Victory*, thy *Shield* will be thy *Palm.*

2. It will put all our Troubles to a *preſent end:* Faith looks on things to come as preſent, and thereby, on things preſent as paſt: It looks on all things, according as they will be in their iſſue and end: It looks on things to come, according to what they will be, when they are come. It looks on things preſent, according to what they will be, when they are paſt. It ſees all paſſing, and conſiders it as paſt already. It ſees all paſſing, the World upon its Wing, the Faſhion of it paſſeth away. It ſees the *Riches* of the World upon their Wings; the Pride, and the Pomp, and the Gallantry, and the Glory of the World, upon their Wings: And it ſees the *Poverty* of the World, the *Troubles* of the World, all upon the Wing. It looks on the *blackeſt Clouds*, as *flying Clouds*, and it conſiders all, as gone already. It looks on the clear, that is, beyond the Clouds; it ſays, as God ſays, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen:* Not onely it ſhall fall, but it is fallen, and ſhall not be able to riſe.

And

And what place can there then be left for fear or fainting? Was the Red-Sea a *Terrour* to *Israel*, when they ſaw themſelves gotten to the other ſide? Did *Sampſon*'s [dead] Lion fright him? Will the Remembrance of what you [have] ſuffer'd be a Terrour to you, when you have gotten through, and are come out of Tribulation? Why, open the Eye of your Faith, and ſee the Coaſt already clear? You will ſee the Red Sea behind you, the Wilderneſs behind you, *Jordan* behind you, and your ſelves gotten ſafe on the Banks of *Canaan*.

Come on Soul, what ſhould hinder thee? May be, thou ſuppoſeſt, thou haſt a great Fight of Affliction to indure; grant thou haſt, yet fear none of thoſe things [thou ſhalt] ſuffer, till thou canſt fear thoſe things thou [haſt] ſuffer'd. Though thou be now putting on thy Armour, believe, and thou may'ſt boaſt as if thou hadſt put it off: *Death where is thy ſting? Grave where is thy victory? Where is the Fury of the Oppreſſour?* Thine Enemies are already under thy feet man, Death it ſelf is ſwallow'd up in Victory.

Chriſtians, Cheriſh, improve, increaſe your Faith, and this will clear your way of all your fears. Wherfore didſt thou doubt, oh thou of little Faith? Oh 'tis a ſign our Faith is but low, when our fears are ſo high. The day, the Lord hears you in this Prayer, *Lord increaſe our Faith*, He delivers you from your fears: Wax ſtrong in Faith, and you will wax bold in your God.

3. Be humble; 'twill be your advantage, that you ſtand on the lower Ground: He whoſe Heart hath

already laid him in the Duſt, will not fear how low his Enemies can lay him.

4. Be peaceable; your *Preces & lachryma*, will be your beſt Weapons: The guilt of your unquiet and unwarrantable Reſiſtance, will weaken your hearts, more than all your partakers will ſtrengthen your hands, *Prov.* 20. 22. *Say not, I will recompence evil, wait on the Lord, and he will ſave thee.* Patient and peaceable ſuffering, will be the beſt way to abaſh your *Perſecutors*, and embolden your Souls.

Now gather up all theſe *Particulars*, and you have the Converſation that becometh the Goſpel; wherein, that I may perſwade, as well as direct you, conſider theſe following *Arguments*;

1. This is to them, to your *Adverſaries*, *an evident token of Perdition*: This united, humble, peaceable, unanimous boldneſs, in your holy courſe, whereby you walk in the Spirit and power of the Goſpel, and are not frighted or terrified out of it; this is, and will be to your *Perſecutors*, an *evident token of Perdition*. The falls and flaws in the Lives of Saints, and their *Quarrellings* and *Diviſions* amongſt themſelvs, do ſtrengthen the hands and the confidence of ſinners againſt them: The Fears and Faintings of Saints, are the flu∫hings of ſinners; when Saints hang the Wing, ſinners lift up the Head.

The Majeſty and Beauty of an Holy Life, joyned with an humble and patient Magnanimity and undantedneſs, will be a Dart in the Liver of the Enemies of it. It is an *evident token* [to them] *of Perdi-*

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tion: It is not onely a Death-Token [upon them], *Perſecution* is a black Mark of a *Son of Perdition*; but it is an *evident Token* [unto them]: It will read them their Doom; it will make their own hearts to fall upon themſelves, and their own Conſciences to give them their Sentence.

2. This is to you an evident Token *of Salvation*, [but to you of Salvation] The Word is ſure, *To him that ordereth his Converſation aright, will I ſhew the Salvation of God. If we be dead with Chriſt, we ſhall alſo live with him; if we ſuffer with him, we ſhall alſo be glorified together with him. To him that overcometh, will I give to ſit with me on my Throne, even as I have overcome, and am ſet down with my Father on his Throne. Fear none of theſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer. Be thou faithful unto the Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*

[Salvation, and that of God] There's much in that Addition [and that of God] it notes, that the Salvation of the ſuffering Saints ſhall be

{ Sure,
{ Great.

1. It notes, That their Salvation ſhall be *ſure*: You ſhall certainly be ſaved, for God hath undertaken for it; that's the import of the Expreſſion. If it be God that juſtifies, who ſhall condemn? If it be God that will ſave, who ſhall deſtroy? The matter is ſure, you ſhall be ſaved, and that of God. It may be Sathan will promiſe, *Hearken to me, and I will ſave you harmleſs.* But he is a Liar and a Deceiver; he is weak,

weak and cannot, false and will not. It may be the evil World will tell you, *If thou wilt cast in thy Lot with us, take our Advice, follow our Example, come along with us, thou may'st save thy self all this harm and loss.* But there is as much trust to the Children, as to the Father of Lies: But if the Lord God, the God of Power, the God of Truth, says, *I will save, who shall say nay?*

2. It notes, that their Salvation shall be *great*: The great God will do for them great Things; He will save them by a *mighty Salvation.* He will save them against all those *mighty hinderances* that lie in the way. *Who art thou, O great Mountain! before* Zerubbabel, *thou shalt become a Plain.* All the difficulties, and unlikelihoods, all the astonishing, and flesh-non-plus-ing Obstacles, that stand in the way of their *Redemption*, will be nothing before the Mighty God. He will save them from their *mighty sins, sufferings*, and *fears*; from the vanity and vexations of this Earth, and from the Vengeance of Eternal Fire.

Christians, Do but go on, walk with Christ, suffer with Christ, and fear none of those Things, which you shall suffer: and this shall be to you an evident Token of Salvation, and that of God.

3. Consider again the Argument of the Text: *These things do, and the God of Peace shall be with you.*

What encouragement there is in this Promise, I have already shew'd you.

Two

Two things I ſhall onely mention here, one of which hath been inſiſted on already.

Conſider,

First, *If God be with you, all ſhall make for you.*

Secondly, *If God be with you, you ſhall ſhortly be with God.*

1. *If God be with you, all ſhall make for you:* Remember what you have heard out of *Rom.* 8. 28, 31. Chriſtians, perhaps you will not know, how to make a good Conſtruction of ſome Providences that may poſſibly befall you, before you die. Such Caſes there may be, that *Providence* may ſeem to be a plain Contradiction of the *Promiſe.* Suppoſe the People of God, in any Nation under Heaven, ſhould at any time have not onely an Innundation of Temporal Calamities, Famine, and Peſtilence, and Sword, Oppreſſion, Rapine, and Cruelty; but a Floud of Spiritual Judgments alſo, breaking in upon them; A Famine of the Word, an Eclipſe of the Light of the Glorious Goſpel among them; their green Paſture trodden down, their pure Waters puddled, God's Spiritual Worſhip made to give place to Will-Worſhip, Superſtition and Idolatry; the Inſtitutions of God, to the Inventions of Men; his Houſe made an Habitation for *Dragons*, for the *Scritch-Owl*, and the *Bittern*, for *Ziim* and *Jim*, and every unclean thing.

And

And that, in ſuch a time, when they had given themſelves to more than ordinary praying, and faſting, and humbling themſelves, and repenting of their iniquities; when they had ſet their faces towards *Sion*, and were full of hopes, that the Lord was about to build, and to plant; to caſt out their rubbiſh, to repair their ruines, to bring in their peace like a River, and to eſtabliſh his Tabernacle amongſt them. Suppoſe that in ſuch a time, the Lord ſhould even ſpit in their faces, ſhould daſh all their hopes, and put into their hands a cup of trembling; ſhould bring trouble upon their loyns, and cauſe darkneſs to cover their faces; ſhould expoſe them to ſcorn and contempt, make them a reproach, and a by-word; ſhould ſuffer them to be trampled upon, as the filth of the World, and the off-ſcouring of all things.

Suppoſe you ſhould have liv'd in ſuch times and places, and have heard them complaining thus; All things work for good, why we ſee all things fall out for the worſe; ſo far are our evill things from working for good, that our good things have wrought our hurt. Not onely our outward good things, our peace, and our plenty, but our ſpiritual good things, have undone us; our ſpiritual liberties, and Priviledges, our Ordinances, our Duties, our Prayers, our Faſtings, our Zeal for the Lord of Hoſts; not only our ſins, but our Prayers, our repentings, our reformings have undone us. We have prayed, and faſted, to good purpoſe; we have even prayed our ſelves into poverty, contempt, darkneſs, confuſion; into the ſnares that have been laid for us, and into the hands of thoſe that hate us. All theſe things are againſt us; all our fears are come upon us; all our comforts, yea,

and

and our hopes too, are running from us; the whole courſe of Providence, ſeems to be driving on to our utter ruine; every day, every hour, it grows darker and darker, worſe and worſe; every ſpoak of the Wheel, every turn of the wheel, renders our condition more helpleſs, and hopeleſs. Our adverſaries are become rampant; our Soul is filled with their ſcorn and fury; our friends, are as a broken tooth, or a foot out of joynt; our hopes are a Spiders Web, or as the giving up the Ghoſt; the Almighty cauſes all his ſtorms, and billows, to paſſe over us; one day telleth another, one night certifieth another, and propheſies to us, nothing but deſtruction upon deſtruction, deſolation upon deſolation; and where is the promiſe of his coming? the hope of *Iſrael* is aſleep, her Saviour is a ſtranger; the Ark of God is taken, the glory is departed, yea, and God himſelf ſeems to be gone over to the Camp of the *Philiſtins*, and marching againſt us; we have waited for light, but behold obſcurity for brightneſs, but we walk in darkneſs; the Harveſt is paſt, the Summer is ended, and we are not ſaved, neither, is there yet any to tell us how long.

Suppoſe you ſhould have ſtood by, and have ſeen or heard any ſuch things any where in the World, would you not have ſaid, can any good come out of ſuch a dark abyſſe? out of ſuch a concatenation of ſo many dreadful and diſmal Providences? Why, by what hath been already ſaid, you might have anſwered thus, Stay but a while, till the whole wheel be come about, till God hath brought off his work from the wheel; and then you ſhall ſee, Providence and the Promiſe, meeting together, and kiſſing each other,

other, and ſhall be able to ſay in this caſe, what *Solomon* did in *Iſraels*, 1 King. 8 56. *Bleſſed be God, that hath given reſt to his people* Iſrael, *according to all that he promiſed; there hath not failed* [*one word*] *of all his good promiſe, which he promiſed by the hand of his Servants.*

Chriſtians, whatever may come upon you, at any time, while you live in this World, diſtruſt not your God, nor be at all diſmayed; you ſhall ſee the day either here, or hereafter, and 'twill be never the worſe, if it be not till hereafter (take it upon the credit of this word, All things ſhall work together for good) You ſhall ſee the day when your hearts ſhall rejoyce and ſay, oh 'twas happy for us, that matters went ſo croſs with us. 'Twas happy we were ſo poor, and brought ſo low, and laid in the dark, and ſtrip'd ſo naked, of all that we either took pleaſure, or put confidence in.

Now we ſee, that the Lord had a more glorious deſign, that he was carrying on for us, ſtep by ſtep, by every thing that came upon us, than we were aware of, or could have imagined. It's true, the *Shimeis* have been curſing, the *Iſhmaels* have been mocking, the *Rabſhakes* have been railing, the Ploughers have been ploughing, the Hunters have been purſuing, and had almoſt overtaken, overcome, and ſwallowed us up quick; but bleſſed be our God, that hath not turned our captivity, and ſaved us by a mighty Salvation; but hath done us good, by all their mocking, and curſing, and raging againſt us: Now we ſee, there was ſuch light ſowing in our dark dayes; ſuch a Peace, a ſowing in thoſe deep furrowes, ſuch an Harveſt of joy ſowing in the days

of

of our tears, as hath now ſprung up unto this glory, and bleſſedneſs. We are beholding to the Devil, and his Inſtruments; our enemies have befriended us, though much againſt their Wills: We could never have ſhined with ſuch beauty on earth, had we not been ſcoured with ſuch unclean wiſpes; we could never have laid up ſuch Treaſure in Heaven, as by their curſings, and cruel perſecutions, our enemies have laid up for us. So our Lord hath told us, *Great is your reward in heaven*, Matth. 5.12. Bleſſed are you that are perſecuted, bleſſed are you that are reviled for my ſake, for righteouſneſs ſake; for great is your reward in heaven. It had not been ſo great, had it not been for our great tribulations: Hell hath given us a lift nearer the Throne of Glory. Comfort and encourage your hearts with theſe words.

2. If God be with you, you ſhall ſhortly be with God; *Father I will, that thoſe whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am: And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to my ſelf, that where I am, ye may be alſo. If we ſuffer with him, we ſhall alſo reign with him. Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the World. So ſhall we be ever with the Lord.*

Brethren, you that lie among the potts, 'tis but a little time, and you ſhall hear that Word, *Come up hither*, into the Kingdom, the Inheritance, prepared for you. There are two *Comes*, or Calls of our Lord; the firſt come, is, *Come and work with me*, come and watch with me, come and follow me. The ſecond is, *Come and reſt with me*; your work is done, your watch

watch is over, your race is run, come and enter into my reſt.

The firſt Come is, *Come down with me*, from the pride, from the pomps and jollities, of this preſent World; come with me into the wilderneſs, into the valley of tears, come and ſuffer with me, come and die with me.

The ſecond Come is, *Come up with me*, up out of the wilderneſs, up out of your Priſons, up from your bonds: your *Jubilee* is come; come up with me: Come, put off your priſon-garments, and put on your robes; ſhake off your fetters, and take up your palms; lay down your Croſs, and take up your Crown: from your priſons, to your Palace; from the ſtocks, to the Throne: You that have deſcended with me, are the ſame who ſhall now aſcend with me, to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

The firſt Come, is the *come of a Suitor*; Come grant me your love; give me your hearts, and accept of mine: This is the Errand, upon which his Ambaſſadours are diſpatched; As *Abraham*'s ſervant, to take you as a Wife for your Lord. This is the meaning of all thoſe Jewels, and Bracelets, they bring in their hands; the Lord ſends Servant upon Servant, Epiſtle upon Epiſtle, Token upon Token, and all ſpeak the ſame word, Come, come, come away and accept of your Lord, and be married to him.

The ſecond Come is, the *Come of the Bridegroom*, Come home with me, into my holy City, into my Royal Manſion; come into my Chamber, come into my Boſome; come and lodg between my Breaſts, live in my preſence, and reſt in my love for ever.

Chriſtian,

Chriſtians, my buſineſs whil'ſt I have been with you, hath been, to bring you to God, to eſpouſe you to Chriſt; and you that have already, or will yet at laſt be perſwaded to give your conſent, and will give me leave to make up the Match, I can give you aſſurance, That he will ſhortly come and make up the Marriage; and muſt ſay to you, as *Naomi* to *Ruth*, *Ruth* 3. 10. *Sit ſtill my Daughter, till thou ſee how the matter will fall; for the Man will not be in reſt, till he have finiſhed the thing this day.* Sit ſtill, Chriſtians, till you ſee how matters will fall; and however they fall, know, your Lord will not be in reſt, till he have finiſhed this thing, and brought you home, to be with him where he is.

I am now parting from you in this confidence, that however, after a few dayes I ſhall ſee your Faces no more in this World, yet I ſhall ſhortly meet you in the Bride-Chamber of Glory, where we ſhall ever be with the Lord.

Beloved in the Lord, I muſt now leave you, but give me leave e're I go, to deal freely with you, and yet a little further, in the cloſe of my day, this once more to open my heart to you; and to tell you,

1. What my parting Fears,
2. What my parting Wiſhes for you are, which I carry upon my ſpirit.

1. My parting Fears, I go off from you with, are eſpecially theſe:

1. I am afraid, that there are many of you, upon whom I have beſtowed my Labour in vain, I am afraid that I have Inſtructed you in vain, exhorted,

perſwaded, beſeeched, and reproved you in vain: 'Twas the Apoſtle's caſe, and his fear, concerning the *Galatians*, *Chap.* 4. 11.

It is my grief, that when I would have no more to ſpeak, but an healing word, a comforting word; I muſt yet drop down a bitter word on ſome of you; That when I would ſpeak onely from *Mount Gerizim*, I muſt yet again ſpeak to ſome from *Mount Ebal*; That when I would leave a Bleſſing behind me upon you all, I am like to leave ſome bound under a Curſe. It's grievous to me thus to ſpeak; yet for the diſcharge of my Duty, and for your own Neceſſity, bear with me: I am afraid, that whil'ſt I have been preaching to you, of an incorruptible Crown, of an Everlaſting Reſt, a Kingdom of Joy and Glory: I am afraid there are many of you, *That have no part nor lot in this matter, but are ſtill in the Gall of Bitterneſs and Bond of Iniquity*; *If the Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt*: And are there none among you, from whom this Goſpel is hid? hid as to the Light of it, hid as to the ſaving power, and efficacy of it? I am afraid there are too many; I am afraid there's many a blind Eye, many an hard Heart, many a Spirit ſtill in Priſon, under the power of their Luſts, and Bruitiſh Senſuality: I am afraid there are many ſuch among you; and are not you afraid ſo to? Oh that you were!

2. I have a greater fear than this; I am afraid of ſome of you, that not onely all my paſt Labours, but this laſt will be loſt alſo. Thoſe that ſtand it out to their laſt day, do uſually ſtand it out in their laſt day. Bleſſed be God, that there are amongſt you thoſe, over whom my Soul is comforted: To whom I can ſpeak in the words of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 6. 16. *God be*

be thanked, that ye were the Servants of ſin; but ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of Doctrine that hath been delivered unto you; and being now made free from ſin, you are become the Servants of Righteouſneſs. Oh that I could thus ſpeak! Oh that I could thus rejoyce over you all! But as the Apoſtle ſaid to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 12.20. *I fear, leſt when I (come) I ſhall (find) you ſuch as I would not.* So muſt I ſay, with a grieved heart, I fear that now I am going I ſhall leave you ſuch as I would not. I would not leave one blind perſon, one vain perſon, one looſe liver, not one unbeliever, or impenitent, amongſt you all. Oh what a good day, would this day of my departure be; what Light would there be in this dark Evening, were it thus with you: if I might ſee you all recovered out of the Snares of the Devil, every man's Eyes open'd, every man's Fetters off, every man's Priſon broken, and his Soul eſcaped from that deadly bondage: if every poor deadly Creature among you, who yet lies bound hand and foot, in his Grave Clothes, might now at laſt ſtand up from the Dead, and live the Life of God, this would be mine and your great rejoyeing. But oh I fear with this Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 12. 21. *My God will humble me*, and grieve me, and afflict me, to ſee in what an woful plight, I muſt leave divers of you.

Oh ye Sons of the Night, you poor, ignorant, and dark Souls, upon whom the Light hath ſhined, but your Darkneſs comprehendeth it not: Oh you poor, obſtinate, and hardned Souls, upon whom I have been ploughing, as upon Rocks, and hewing as upon Adamants, who ſtill remain under as great hardneſs, as if no Dew nor Rain had ever fallen on you. Oh you poor, half-bak'd, almoſt Chriſtians, that have taken

up your *ſtand* in your preſent Attainments; my Soul is under great fears, and muſt weep in ſecret for you, whil'ſt my Tongue muſt be henceforth ſilent: Oh every Soul, that is without fear of himſelf, my Soul is afraid for you, the fearleſs Soul is in a fearful ſtate.

Sinners, let my fears be your fears: What, is there ſuch aſtoniſhing guilt upon you, and yet not afraid? Such a dreadful Roll writ againſt you, and yet not afraid? So many Sabbaths, Sermons, Warnings loſt, and never to be recalled; nor any Aſſurance left of one Sermon, or Warning more, and yet not afraid? Such a ſubtil Devil, ſuch a deceitful Heart, ſuch a tempting World, that you have to deal withall; ſuch a black and bottomleſs Pit into which you are falling, and yet not afraid: Oh what Stocks and Stones hath the Goſpel to deal withall!

Beloved, I have labour'd much with you, both publiquely, and from houſe to houſe, to bring you under a due fear and jealouſie of your ſelves; but hitherto your hearts have been too hard for me: Oh yet for trembling hearts, tremble and ſin not; fear and pray, fear and hope, fear and repent; *Work out your Salvation with fear and trembling*. Oh if my fears were once become your fears: your fears would become my hopes! Oh what a Day-ſpring of hopes, would ariſe from the ſhaking of ſecure hearts! Theſe Fears would be as the thicker Darkneſs, Fore-runners of Break of Day.

2. My parting Wiſhes, and Deſires for you, are,

1. That the good Seed which hath been ſown amongſt you, were well rooted in every heart: I wiſh that my Twenty Years Miniſtry among you, may not be loſt Labour, to any one of your Souls.

2. I wiſh that your next *Seeds man*, may be more skilful and ſucceſsful; that the good Lord will provide you a man, that may teach you in Wiſdom, gain you in Love, lead you on to Life, by an Holy Example; and if the Lord grant you this mercy, I wiſh that ſuch an one may be dearly priz'd, and chearfully accepted by you. God keep this Flock from a Ravening Wolf, and a deceitful Shepheard.

3. I wiſh that there may be no Root of Bitterneſs ſpringing up amongſt you; that there be no Diviſions or Contentions, but that you may live in peace and love, that the God of peace and love may be with you.

4. I wiſh that this place, where ſo much good Seed hath been ſown, may become a *fruitful Field*, that the Fruits of Faith and Repentance, the Fruits of Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, may be in you, and abound; that you may be neither barren, nor unfruitful; that Religion, in the power and practice of it, may ſo viſibly flouriſh, in the ſeveral perſons, in the ſeveral Families, of this Congregation, that they that go by, may ſee, and ſay, This is the *Field which the Lord hath bleſſed*.

5. I wiſh, that whatever Clouds may at any time gather over you, may not fall down in a withering Storm, or a ſweeping Floud, but may paſs away in a Miſt, or diſſolve into a fruitful Dew; that no *Perſecutions*, or *Temptations*, may ever carry you down the Stream with evil men, nor blight any hopeful beginnings, that are budding forth in any of your Souls: If *Tribulation* ſhould be any of your Lots, I wiſh it may not be to you, as the *Hail of Egypt*, but as the *Dew of Hermon*.

6. I wiſh you a joyful Harveſt, that you may reap

in Eternity, what hath been ſown in Time; may you now ſow in Righteouſneſs, and hereafter reap in Mercy: May every one that is now ſowing in Tears, for ever reap in joy: May you that go on your way weeping, bearing pretious Seed, return with joy, and bring your Sheaves with you: May the Showers of this day, be the watering of your Seed, that it may ſpring up to Eternal Life.

Brethren, My hearts deſire for you all is, that you may be ſaved; and if there be any perſons, that bear evil will to me, my particular wiſh for them, is, The Good-will of him that dwelt in the Buſh be thoſe Men's Portions for ever.

Theſe are ſome of my Wiſhes for you; will you joyn your Wiſhes with mine: Will you turn your Wiſhes into Prayers, and let this be your Prayer; *The Lord grant thee thine hearts deſire, and fulfill all thy Mind.*

Brethren, Do I wiſh you any harm in all this? If not, if it be to wiſhed, that the Word of Chriſt were rooted in your Hearts, and your Souls thereby rooted in the Grace of God; if it be to be wiſhed, That your Luſts were rooted out, your ſins dead and dried up, your foot gotten out of the Snare, your Souls brought into the Fold, your Fruits of Righteouſneſs and Holineſs abounding, and growing up unto Eternal Life: If all this to be to be wiſhed, then give in your Votes with mine; wiſh and pray, pray and preſs on, preſs on and wait for the accompliſhment of this Grace in you all. I tell you again, I wiſh you well; and not onely I, but the Lord God that hath ſent me to you: The Lord Jeſus wiſhes you well; he wiſhes and wooes, wooes and weeps, weeps and dies, that your Souls might live, and be bleſſed for ever: He

hath

hath once more ſent me to you, even to the *worſt amongſt you*, to tell you from him, that he's unwilling you ſhould periſh; that he hath a kindneſs for you in his heart, if you will accept it: He hath *Bloud* and *Bowels* for you; *Bloud* to expiate your guilt, to waſh away your filth; and *Bowels* to offer you the benefit of his *Bloud*; with this Wiſh, *Oh that it were theirs! Oh that they would hearken and accept!* Onely I muſt add, That the Lord hath two ſorts of Wiſhes concerning ſinners: The firſt is, *Oh that they would hearken!* Oh that they would come in, be healed, and be ſaved, *Deut.*5.29. This Wiſh is an *Olive Branch*, that brings good Tidings, and gives great hopes of Peace and Mercy.

His laſt Wiſh is, *Oh that they had hearkned*, that they had accepted, *Pſal.*81.13. *Oh that my people had hearkned to me.* Luk.19.42. *Oh that thou hadſt known in this thy day, the things that concern thy peace.* This Wiſh hath nothing but Dread and Death in it: it is the *Black Flagg* hung out, that proclaims *Eternall Wars.* The ſence is, *Iſrael* had once a fair time of it; a time of *Love*, a time of *Grace*, a time of *Peace*: Oh that they had hearkned then, that they had known the Things that concern their peace! But woe, woe to them, 'tis now too late, the Door is ſhut, the Seaſon is over, the Day is paſt; *But now they are hid from thine Eyes.*

There are three deadly darts in this Wiſh [oh that thou hadſt] it includes in it theſe three cutting words,

Thou haſt not.
Thou mighteſt.
Thou ſhalt not for ever.

1. There is this in it, [Thou hast not.] What have I not? why, thou hast not known the things that belong to thy peace. Thou hast had the door of Glory, the Gate of Heaven open to thee, and hast been call'd for, and invited in, but thou hast lost the opportunity. Thou knewest not when thou wert well offered, nor would'st take notice what a day was before thee, what a price was in thine hand; thy peace, the Gospel of peace, the Prince of peace, a Kingdom of peace was set open, offered, and brought home to thy doors, but thou hadst so many other matters to look after, that thou tookest no notice of it, but hast let it slip. There's one Dart. [Thou hast not known.] There's a Gospel gone, there's a Christ gone, there's a Soul, a Kingdom lost.

2. There is this in it, [Thou mightest.] Oh that thou hadst? why, Might I? yes thou might'st, if thou would'st thou might'st. Thy God did not mock thee, when he preach'd peace to thee; he was willing, and wish'd it thine; if thou would'st, thou might'st have made it thine own; but whilest he would, thou would'st not.

There's another Dart [I might have known] I have none to thank but my self for the loss, mine undoing was mine own doing. There are no such torments, as when the Soul flies upon it self, and takes revenge on it self; oh the gashes that such self-reflections make. Soul, how camest thou in hither, into all this misery? oh 'tis of my self, my self, that my destruction is. The door was open, and I was told of it, and was bid come in, but I would not. That I am lost and undone, was not my *Fate*, which I could not avoid, but my *Fault* and my folly. It seems to give some ease of our *torment*, when we

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can ſhift off the *fault*. It was not I, but the Woman, ſaid *Adam*, It was not I, but the Serpent, ſaid the Woman; if that had been true, it would have given eaſe, as well as ſerv for an excuſe. This *thought* ['Twas mine own doing] tears the very caul of the heart. Oh I have none to blame but my ſelf, mine own fooliſh and froward heart. This is my ignorance, this is my unbelief, this is my wilfulneſs, my luſts, and my pleaſures, and my Idols, that I was running after that, have brought me under this dreadful loſs. 'Twas my own doing.

3. There is this in it, [Thou ſhalt not for ever.] Oh that thou hadſt! why, may I not [yet?] Is there no hope of recovering the opportunity? not one word more, not one hour more, may not the Sun go [one] degree backward? No, no, 'tis too late, too late; thou haſt had thy day; from henceforth no more for ever. There's the laſt Dart, [Times paſt] there's the death, the Hell, the anguiſh, the Worm that ſhall gnaw to eternity.

This one word [Time's paſt] ſets all Hell a roaring; and when its once ſpoken to a ſinner on Earth, there's Hell begun. Go thy way wretch, fill up thy meaſure, and fall into thy place. The Goſpel hath no more to ſay to thee, but this one word, *Becauſe I have called, and thou refuſedſt, I have ſtretched out my hand, and thou regardedſt not, but haſt ſet at nought all my Counſels, and wouldeſt none of my reproofs; I alſo will laugh at thy calamities, and mock when thy fear cometh; when thy fear cometh as deſolation, and thy deſtruction cometh as a Whirle-wind, when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon thee; then ſhalt thou call, but I will not anſwer, thou ſhalt ſeek me early, but ſhalt not find me.*

Beloved,

Beloved, my hopes are, and I am not able to say, but that you are yet under the first wish; Oh that they would. Christ is yet preaching you *to faith*, and sends his Wish along with his Word, *Oh that they would believe*. Christ is yet preaching *Repentance* and Conversion to you, and wishes, *O that they would repent*, that they would be converted; and to this wish of my Lord, my Soul, and all that is within me, sayes Amen.

Brethren, will you yet again say your Lord nay? shall Christ have his wish? shall your Servant for Jesus sake, shall I have my wish? will you now at last consent to be sanctified, and to be saved? let me have this wish, and I dare promise you from the Lord, you shall have yours, even whatever your Soul can desire.

Brethren, this once hear, this once be prevailed upon; be content that your lusts be rooted out, and your Lord planted into your Souls. Be content to be pardoned, content to be converted, content to be saved. This once hear, lest if ye now refuse, ye no more be perswaded with, *oh that they would!* but be for ever confounded with, *oh that they had!* Lest all our wishes, and wooings of you, be turned into weepings, and mournings over you; this once hear; oh that you would.

I heartily thank you, for your good wishes, and good will towards me; for your willing and chearful entertainment of my person, and attendance on my Ministry. And particularly, for your passionate desire of my longer stay among you. Which desire if God had not, my Soul could not have denyed you. Though the Almighty, to whose pleasure it's meet that we all submit, hath said Nay to that wish of

yours

yours; yet let your Souls say Amen, to this last of mine, that the Lord God would dwell among you, and in you, both now and for ever.

And having thus finished my Labours among you, I shall now close up with this double account.

1. Of my discharge of my Ministry in this place.

2. Of my deprivall. And shall so commit you to God, and to the word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified.

1. Of my discharge of my Ministry; what my Doctrine and manner of life hath been, is known to you; and what my aim and intent hath been, is known to God. The searcher of hearts, knowes, that 'tis the salvation of Souls, that hath been the mark at which I have levelled. My way hath been to use all plainness, that I might be made manifest in your Consciences: Weaknesses, and infirmities, both natural and sinful, (the Lord pardon it) I have had many. I am sensible, that much more might have been done, both in publick and in private, had it not been for a weakly body, and a sloathful heart.

I repent that I have had no more zeal for God, no more compassion to Souls; I repent that I have been no more constant, and importunate with you, about the matters of Eternity. Oh *Eternity, Eternity*, that thou wert no more in the heart, and Lips of the Preacher in the hearts, and eares of the hearers. But while I thus judge my self for my failings. Blessed be God for any sincerity to his name, and good will to your Souls, that he hath seen in me. Blessed be God, I have a witness in my Conscience, and I hope in yours also, that I have not shunned to declare

to

to you the whole Counsel of God. Brethren, I call Heaven and Earth to witness this day, that *I* have set before you life and death, good and evil, and have not ceased from day to day, to warn you to choose life, and that good way, that leads to it; and to escape for your lives, from the way of sin and death. Oh remember the many instructions *I* have given you, the many Arguments whereby *I* have striven with you, the many Prayers that have been offered up, for the guiding and gaining your Souls, into the path of life, and the turning your feet out of the way of destruction. Oh might *I* be able to give this Testimony concerning you all, at my departure, *they have trodden in the right path, they have chosen the good part that shall not be taken from them.*

Brethren, Beloved, with whom *I* have travelled in birth, that Christ might be formed in you; *I* must shortly give up my account in a more solemn Assembly; will you help me to give it up with joy, by shewing your Souls before the Lord, as the Seal of my Ministrie. Every sincere Convert among you, will be a Crown of rejoycing to me in that day. So let me rejoyce, and let my joy be the joy of you all.

What shall *I* say more? *If* there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, any bowels and mercies; if the Glorie of the Eternal God, the Honour of the everlasting Gospel, the safety of your immortal Souls, the incorruptible Crown, the exceeding, eternal weight of glory, weigh any thing with you, then once more let me beseech you, by all this, to hearken to that word of the Gospel, which God hath spoken to you by me.

2. Of my deprivall. The most glorious morn-

ing

ing hath its Evening; the hour is come wherein the Sun is ſetting, upon not a few of the Prophets; the ſhadows of the Evening are ſtretched forth upon us; our day drawes, our work ſeems to be at an end. Our Pulpits, and our places muſt know us no more.

This is the Lords doing, let all the Earth keep ſilence before him.

It is not a light thing for me, Brethren, to be laid aſide from the work, and caſt out of the Vineyard of the Lord; and it muſt be ſomething of weight, that muſt ſupport under ſo ſevere a doom.

I know there are not a few, that will add to the affliction of the afflicted, by telling the World, 'tis their own fault, they might prevent it if they would; whether this be ſo or no, God knoweth, and let the Lord be Judge. Bleſſed be God, whatever be, this is not laid to our charge, as the reaſon of our ſeclusion, either *inſufficiency* or *ſcandall*.

You are not ignorant, what things there are impoſed on us, as the condition of our continuing our Miniſtration; which how lawful and expedient ſoever they ſeem in the Judgment of many, yet have the moſt ſpecious Arguments that plead for them, left me utterly diſſatisfied in my Conſcience about them.

I muſt profeſs before God, Angels, and men, that my non-ſubmiſſion, is not from any diſloyalty to Authority, nor from pride, humour, or any factious diſpoſition, or deſign; but, becauſe I dare not contradict my light, nor do any thing concerning which my heart tells me, the Lord ſayes, do it not.

After

After all my most impartial Enquiries, after all my seeking counsel from the Lord, after all my considering, and consulting with men of all perswasions about these *Matters*, I find my self so far short of satisfaction, that I am plainly put to this choice, to part with my *Ministry*, or my *Conscience*. I dare not lie before God and the World; nor come and tell you, I approve, I allow, I heartily consent, to what I neither do, nor can; but must choose rather, that my *Ministry* be seal'd up by my *Sufferings*, than lengthned out by a *Lie*: Through the Grace of God, though men do, yet my heart shall not reproach me while I live; *If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things*. But however, though I must now no longer act as a *Minister*, I shall, through the Grace of God, endeavour peaceably, and patiently, to suffer as a Christian.

I should, to testifie my *Obedience* to *Authority*, have become all Things to all Men, to the uttermost that I could, with any clearness of heart: But since *Matters* stand so, that I must lose my place, or my peace, I chearfully suffer my self to be thrust off the Stage.

And now welcome the Cross of Christ, welcome Reproach, welcome Poverty, Scorn, and Contempt, or whatever else may befall me on this account. This Morning I had a Flock, and you had a Pastour; but now behold a Pastour without a Flock, a Flock without a Shepheard: This Morning I had an House, but now I have none; This Morning I had a Living, but now I have none: *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, Blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

Beloved, I am sensible of many Weaknesses and Disadvantages I am under, which may render a suf-

ferings

fering state the harder to be born; help me by your *Prayers*; and not me onely, but all my *Brethren* also, with whom my Lot must fall; *Pray for us, for we trust that we have a good Conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.* Pray,

1. That God would make our Silence speak, and preach the same Holy Doctrine, that we have preached with our Lips.

2. That he would give *Supports* answerable to our *Sufferings*; that he who comforteth those that are cast down, will also comfort his Servants that are cast out.

3. That according to our earnest expectation, and our hope, as always, so now also, Christ may be magnified in us, whether it be by Life, or by Death.

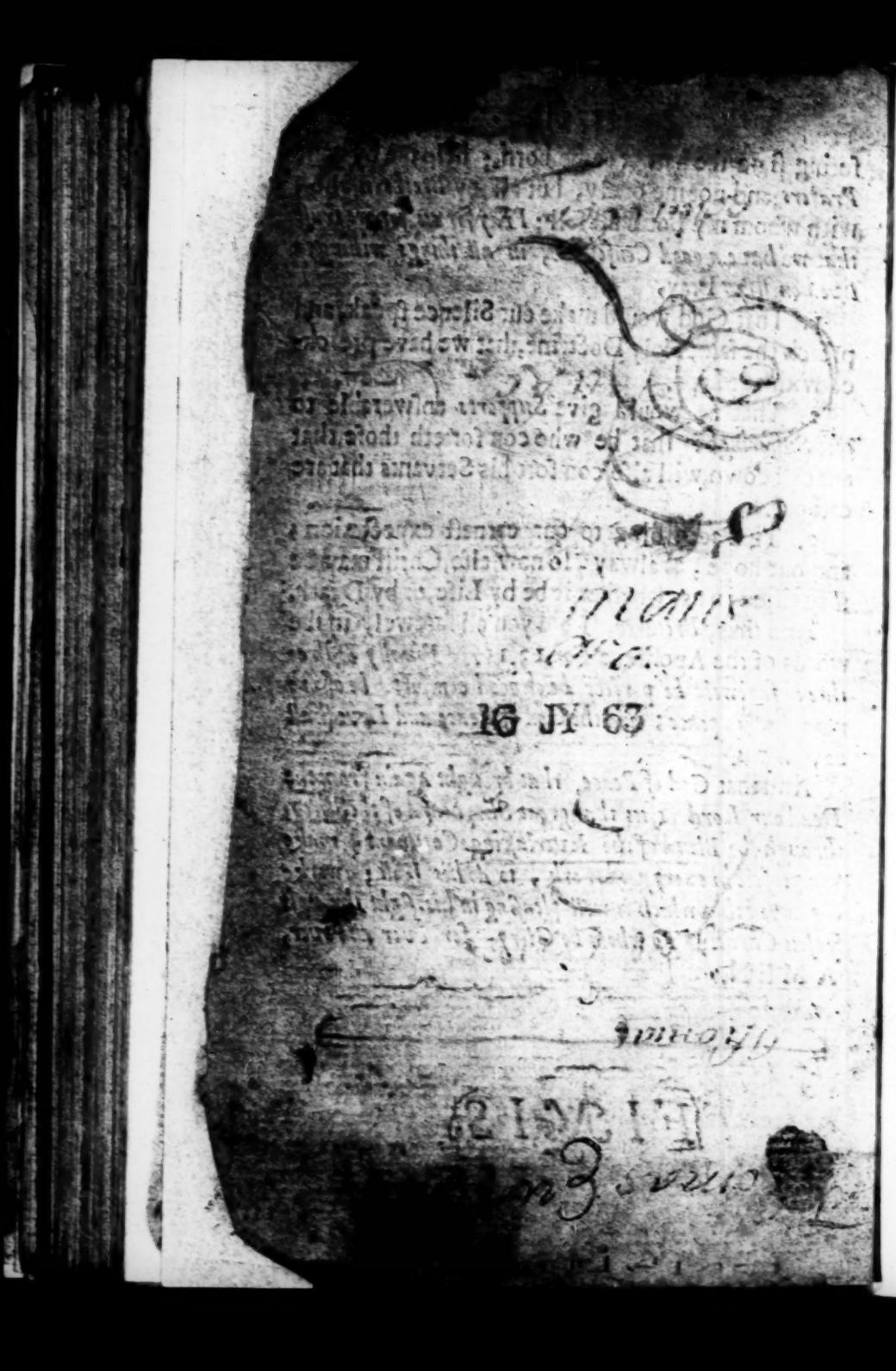
And thus, *Brethren*, I bid you all farewel, in the words of the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 13. 11. *Finally, Brethren, farewel, be perfect be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of Peace and Love shall be with you.*

And that *God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepheard of the Sheep, through the Bloud of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; To whom be Glory, for ever and ever,* AMEN.

FINIS.

Westampton
March 24 1765

William M. Michaels Book
Bought of Estat Wilks Cleaburg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